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Infant Baptism

Ever since the days of the Anabaptists, in the early part of the sixteenth century, infant baptism has been a controverted question in the Church. Also in our day there are those who reject pedobaptism, because there is no text in the Bible which explicitly commands that also infants should be baptized, as they were commanded to be circumcised in the Old Testament.

The words of our Savior "Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," though brief and concise, are sufficiently clear and plain to cover this point. Still it may be worth our while to study the historic setting and background of these words to determine their implication, and also the consequent practise of the Church to learn in which sense those nearest to the times of Christ understood these words; in other words, whether there was anything in the prevailing usages of the time when these words were spoken and in the later practises of the Church that will throw some light on the question whether or not infants are to be baptized.

When Jesus commanded to baptize the nations, He did not introduce a rite the like of which had never been heard of before and concerning the scope of which the disciples may have had a reasonable doubt whether or not it was also to be applied to children. Not only had John baptized in the wilderness, but even among the Jews it had long been a practise to baptize people. For when the priests and Levites inquired of John, who he was, they found nothing strange and new in the rite of baptism itself, but they questioned his authority to baptize. "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" John 1:25. From Heb. 9:10 we learn that the Jews had "divers baptisms," which were prescribed by the Levitical Law, Num. 19. These were baptisms for uncleanness and were

repeated as occasion demanded. However, the priests and Levites did not have these baptisms in mind when they interviewed John. His was a different baptism, a baptism for discipleship. Had he baptized Gentiles to make them proselytes, they might have let it pass; but John was baptizing Jews, the children of Abraham, the disciples of Moses, and for such a baptism, so they believed, he had no authority unless he be "that Christ, or Elias, or that prophet."

All Jews, men, women, and children, regarded themselves as having been baptized unto Moses, 1 Cor. 10:1, 2. Jewish writers speak of their baptism as having taken place in the wilderness. Maimonides says: "By three things did Israel enter into covenant, by circumcision and baptism and sacrifice. Circumcision was in Egypt, as it is written: 'No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.' Baptism was in the wilderness just before the giving of the Law, as it is written: 'Sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes [washing of garments was understood to mean the washing of the whole body]. And sacrifice, as it is written Ex. 24:5.'" It is irrelevant to our present purpose to show whether or not this baptism was a divine institution; suffice it to say that the Jews believed that in the wilderness all the people, including the children, were baptized. They furthermore held that this baptism availed for all their descendants; *filius baptizati habetur pro baptizato*. Hence, the natural Jew did not believe himself or his children to be in need of baptism, which may somewhat explain the attitude of the Pharisees and lawyers to the Baptism of John, Luke 7:30.

However, the case was quite different with proselytes, whose forebears had not been baptized unto Moses. Maimonides writes: "And so in all ages when an Ethnic is willing to enter into the covenant and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God and take upon himself the yoke of the Law, he must be circumcised and baptized and bring a sacrifice; or if it be a woman, be baptized and bring a sacrifice. As it is written, 'As you are, so shall the stranger be,' Num. 15:15. How are you? By circumcision and baptism and bringing of a sacrifice. So likewise the stranger through all generations; by circumcision and baptism and bringing of sacrifice. . . . A stranger that is circumcised and not baptized or baptized and not circumcised, he is not a proselyte till he both be circumcised and baptized. And he must be baptized in the presence of three." The Babylonian Talmud has this: "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised; and when he is cured [of the wound of circumcision], they baptize him in the presence of two wise men, saying, 'Behold, he is an Israelite in all things.'" It is evident, then, that the custom of the Jews before

our Savior's time, and, they themselves affirm, from the beginning of their Law, was to baptize as well as circumcise any proselyte that came over to them from the nations.

As in the wilderness the Jews were baptized and also their children, so the baptism for proselytism was not limited to adult persons, but it included also little children. The Gemara Babylon has this: "If with a proselyte his sons and his daughters be made proselytes, that which is done by their father redounds to their good." "They are wont to baptize such a proselyte in infancy upon the profession of the House of Judgment." The Mishna, both of the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmud, speaks of children over or under the age of three years being made proselytes by baptism. It is not our purpose to examine the institution, the validity, and the efficacy of this baptism for proselytism, we merely wish to establish the fact that according to Jewish writers it was a common practise among the Jews to baptize proselytes and that it was just as common a practise to baptize the children of proselytes and that this practise dates back to the giving of the Law and must have been in vogue at the time of our Savior.

Now, it is true, the question whether or not the Baptism which Christ instituted should also be administered to children may not be determined by what the Jews did with the children of proselytes but must be answered from the words of institution. However, if it had been the intention of Christ to limit His Baptism to adult persons only, excluding infants, then we should expect that in the face of the prevailing Jewish custom of baptizing also infants He should have forewarned His disciples, telling them very plainly that they should disciple or proselyte for Him only adult persons. Whenever a custom is continued, nothing need be said; but if a radical change is made, then those who have grown up under the old custom must be told. It is therefore no point against infant baptism that in the command of Christ infants are not expressly mentioned; it was not necessary to do this. Only in the case that they were to be excluded from Baptism special mention of them would have been necessary. The disciples knew that under Jewish custom Gentile children were baptized to become disciples, or proselytes, of Moses; if the Savior did not want children to be made His disciples by Baptism, then He certainly would have so informed His disciples.

But what do we find? As the Jews made proselytes of the Gentiles, including their children, so Christ tells His disciples to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. In view of the prevailing custom of the Jews we cannot help thinking that, nothing being said to the contrary, the Baptism of Christ in this point continued

the common practise and was intended for both adults and infants. There is indeed a vast difference between the Jewish baptism unto proselytism and Christ's Baptism unto discipleship, as may be seen from what the Bible teaches concerning the benefit and power of Christian Baptism. But in this point as to who is to be baptized there is no indication that any change was intended. "Christ took into His hands baptism as He found it, adding only this, that He exalted it to a nobler purpose and to a larger use." (Lightfoot.)

Now, what do we learn concerning infant baptism from the New Testament? Of the Baptism of John we read, Matt. 3:5, 6: "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Children are not expressly mentioned, but in view of the commonness of the thing for people that came to be baptized to bring their children along with them, even as they brought young children to Jesus that He should touch them, Mark 10:13, it is very probable that also children were baptized of John.

In John 3:3 we read: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Some have questioned whether Christ really had Baptism in mind when He spoke these words. But our Savior here uses an expression that was a current phrase in His day and which all Jews understood to refer to baptism. The Jews called the baptism of a Gentile his new birth, his regeneration, being born again. In the Gemara we read: "If any one become a proselyte, he is like a child new born." And in Maimonides: "The Gentile that is made a proselyte, and the slave that is made free, behold, he is like a child new-born." In the Jewish mind the idea of a new birth was associated with baptism. Christ uses this term, and in v. 5 adds the words "of water and of the Spirit," thereby clearly indicating that He was speaking of Baptism. To be sure, the new birth Christ had in mind and the new birth of the Jewish baptism were by no means the same; but the words "born again of water and the Spirit" could by Nicodemus not have been understood otherwise than referring to Baptism.

However, Christ did say something that ran contrary to Jewish opinion. The Jews did not exclude the children of the Gentiles from their baptism; however, they exempted themselves and their children, believing that they were to be accounted baptized because of the baptism of their fathers in the wilderness and therefore also reborn. And now Jesus tells this master in Israel that whoever is to enter the kingdom of God must be born again, not only the Gentiles but also the Jews, also Nicodemus. Christ did not expressly mention children, but they are certainly included

in the word $\tau\iota\varsigma$, any one. And in order that no one may think that a child is in the kingdom of God by virtue of the baptism and new birth of its parents, He adds: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," v. 6. What Christ wishes to impress upon Nicodemus is that all men, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, adults and children, are by reason of their natural birth flesh born of flesh and that they cannot enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again of water and the Spirit. Christ could not have spoken as He did if children were not to be admitted to Baptism or if "the infant of the believer obtains the regenerating grace by virtue of his birth and descent from a believer in covenant with God" (Shedd, according to *Pop. Sym.*, § 261).

The words of our Savior, Matt. 28:19, are just as plain. "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." By no trick of interpretation can we exclude children and infants from the concept "nations, $\xi\theta\nu\eta$, peoples." Speaking of the American people, or nation, no sane person would ever think of excluding our children. What right, then, has any one to exclude them from the nations which by Baptism are to be made disciples of Christ?

The Jewish practise throws some light on these words. Gentiles were initiated into the Jewish religion by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, and in the case of women, by baptism and sacrifice. But such baptism was by no means denied to infants. "An Israelite that takes a little heathen child or finds a heathen infant and baptizes him for a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte," Maimonides. Thus it was common usage to make Gentiles and their children disciples of Moses by baptism. If Christ had contemplated a change so as to exclude little children, a definite statement to that effect would have been necessary for the guidance of His disciples. But He throws the world open to them, and it is their commission to proselyte, to disciple, all nations.

But for the fact that again and again the argument against infant baptism is made that, before a person is baptized, he must according to the words of Christ be taught, and that, because infants cannot be taught, their baptism must therefore be deferred until such instruction is possible, it would hardly seem necessary to make answer thereto. For Christ does not say that we must first teach, then baptize, and then teach again, but He says: $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \xi\theta\nu\eta$, disciple all nations, and then, using participles, He tells us how this is to be done, namely, by baptizing and by teaching them. The word $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$ shows us what is to be accomplished by Baptism and by teaching: all nations are to be made proselytes, disciples, of Christ; they are to

be made Christians. These words of our Savior contain not only the command to baptize the nations, but they also show the blessings of Baptism, communion with the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the power of Baptism to make us disciples of Christ, to work faith.

Let us also look at Col. 2:11, 12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of sin by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Paul is addressing Christians and tells them that they also were circumcised, not, indeed, with the circumcision made with hands, as the Jews were circumcised in the flesh, but with the circumcision of Christ, which consisted in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. And this inward, this spiritual circumcision took place when they were buried with Christ in Baptism. Paul does not mean to say that the outward rite of Baptism has taken the place of the outward rite of circumcision. Nevertheless, there is a certain resemblance between the carnal circumcision of the Jews and the spiritual circumcision of the Christians in Baptism. It is therefore not doing violence to the sense of the text to say that even as the circumcision of the flesh, which was symbolical of the circumcision of the heart (Num. 10:16), was performed on infants, so Baptism, which also signifies an inward circumcision, should likewise be administered to children.

What was the practise of the apostles? It is true no express mention is made of children that were baptized. This we can well understand, for the apostles could not reach the children except through the parents, who had authority over them. But when they had won the parents, it is very likely that these would follow the established Jewish custom of baptizing the children of the proselytes at the request of their fathers or mothers, and would therefore bring also their children to be made disciples of Christ by Baptism. Thus we read of the jailer at Philippi that he and all his were baptized (Acts 16:33), and of Lydia we read that she was baptized and her household (v. 15). There is no instance on record where the baptism of any child was deferred just because he was still a child. If the Christian practise in this respect was to differ from the prevailing Jewish practise, we should expect some mention of this fact. In the matter of circumcision there was a difference. When the Judaizing Christians insisted that the Gentiles must needs be circumcised, the apostles took a definite stand against it. If the Church had not baptized the children of the Gentiles that were received into its communion, would not the same Jews have pointed to the custom of the Jewish Church,

which baptized the children of the proselytes, and have insisted that the children of the Gentiles should also be baptized? But there is no indication of any such question confronting the Church; hence its practise must have conformed to the Jewish practise in this respect. The Judaizing brethren raised an issue on practically every point on which there was a departure in the Christian Church from their former customs; but no issue was raised on infant baptism. Hence we must conclude that the practise of the Jews, who baptized the children of proselytes, was continued by the Christians and that they baptized also children for discipleship of Christ. "If baptism and baptizing of infants had been a new thing and unheard of till John Baptist came, as circumcision was till God appointed it to Abraham, there would have been, no doubt, an express command for baptizing infants, as there was for circumcision. But when the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used, as appears by uncontestable evidence from their (Jews') writers, there need not be express assertion that such and such persons were to be the object of baptism, when it was well known, before the Gospel began, that men, women, and children were baptized." (Lightfoot.)

One of the oldest postapostolic testimonies for infant baptism we find in Justin Martyr's *Apology*. Speaking of the manner in which men were made new by Christ and dedicated themselves to God, he says of those who were persuaded and believed the things taught among them: "Then they are led by us to where there is water, and according to the regeneration according to which we ourselves were regenerated they are regenerated." According to the usage of the times the words "regeneration" and "regenerated" stand for "baptism" and "baptized" (see Tit. 3:5), even as the Jews called their baptism a regeneration. In another place he says: "Several persons, male and female, of sixty and seventy years, who were made disciples to Christ in their childhood [οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν μαθητεύθησαν τῷ Χριστῷ] do continue uncorrupted." Here Justin Martyr tells us that there were among them some men and women who in their childhood μαθητεύθησαν, were made disciples to Christ. Let us note that he uses the same word, μαθητεύθησαν, which we find in Matt. 28:19, μαθητεύσατε, and shows us that these people were in their childhood made disciples, regenerated, baptized. Now, it is assumed that Justin Martyr wrote about ninety years after Matthew, who wrote several decades after the ascension of Christ. Hence the people who at the writing of Justin Martyr were about seventy years old must have been made disciples of Christ some thirty or thirty-five years after the ascension, that is, in the midst of the apostolic times, within a generation after Matthew's writing.

Another witness is Irenaeus, the most eminent teacher of the Church in the second half of the second century. He likewise uses the term "regeneration" to signify "baptism." In his book *Adversus Haereses* he writes: "And again, when He gave His disciples the commission of regenerating unto God, He said unto them: 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'" Here the commission of regenerating simply means the commission of baptizing. In another place Irenaeus says: "For He came to save all persons by Himself; all, I mean, who by Him are regenerated unto God—infants and little ones and children and youths and elder persons. Therefore He went through the several ages, for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants; to the little ones He was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness; for youths He was a youth," etc. When Irenaeus speaks of infants regenerated, it is plain enough that these are not capable of regeneration in any other sense of the word than as it is wrought by Baptism, i. e., the outward act of baptism accompanied with that grace of God whereby He regenerates their hearts.

Origen, 185—254, in his *Comments on Romans*, translated into Latin by Rufinus, has this: "For this also it was that the Church had from the apostles a tradition to give Baptism even to infants. For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that there is in all persons a natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit, by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin."

In the writings of Augustine, 354—430, we find copious references to infant baptism. In a letter to Boniface he writes: "Let not that disturb you that some people do not bring their infants to Baptism with the faith [purpose] that they may by spiritual grace be regenerated to eternal life, but because they think they do procure or preserve their bodily health by this remedy. For the children do not therefore fail of being regenerated because they are not brought by others with this intention."

Many other writers might be quoted, who all show that infant baptism was a universal practise in the Church from the day of the apostles down to the rise of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century.*

At the present time infant baptism is consistently practised in the Lutheran and Catholic churches. In some Reformed bodies it has been entirely discarded, and where still observed, it is not

* For a comprehensive treatment of the history of infant baptism we would refer to *History of Infant Baptism*, by Dr. W. Wall, Vicar of Shoreham in Kent, 1675—1728, from which book was taken much of the information offered in this article.

held to be necessary. Generally speaking, the objections to infant baptism are of two kinds; one pertains to the infant, the other to Baptism itself.

One objection to infant baptism is based on the seeming inability of the child to understand and to appreciate what is being done with it. For this reason it is held that Baptism is absolutely useless to the child. It is true, as we look upon the infants we baptize, we observe that sometimes they sleep, sometimes they cry, or appear altogether unconcerned as to what is being said and done. And it is quite natural that the thought comes to us, How can this baptism be of any benefit to the infant, and what is the use of baptizing him? These rationalistic considerations are perhaps the chief reason why some defer the baptism of their children until they have reached the age of assent.

However, the same line of reasoning might have been advanced against circumcision. Still, it was definitely commanded that a child eight days old was to be circumcised, Gen. 17:12. Besides, parents do not follow that rule otherwise with their children in temporal affairs. They will do for their children what they believe to be good for them, even though these do not assent or are vehemently opposed to it. Where there is a question whether or not a thing is beneficial, the concerns of the child are not lightly to be disposed of by another; but in Baptism the benefit is evident and unquestionable: the child enters into communion with God and is made the recipient of His grace. In every case it is for the good of the child to be baptized; therefore children should be brought to baptism even though, as it may seem to us, they do not consciously assent. One may privilege a person though he be incapable of knowing it. The argument that by infant baptism we predetermine the religion of the child has as little force as the argument that by the schooling and education we give a child we predetermine his career in life. We do the one; why not the other?

In Baptism large benefits and privileges are bestowed upon the child. It is a means of grace, through which God's grace and forgiveness is not only offered but through which also the Holy Ghost is given, who so operates on the heart of the child that by faith he accepts the proffered gifts. How this is done is a profound mystery to us. But for the fact that it is done, we have the authority of God, who tells us that by water and the Spirit we are born again (John 3:5) and who calls Baptism a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Tit. 3:5). Children, who by their natural birth are flesh born of flesh, are by Baptism reborn unto God and become partakers of all His blessings in Christ.

This benefit and power of Baptism is denied by many. And this is the other reason why they object to infant baptism. Reformed theology holds that the Word and the Sacraments are not means by which God imparts His Spirit and grace. With respect to Baptism the Reformed confessions state that it merely symbolizes regeneration and forgiveness of sins and is an outward token and seal that regeneration and purification has been effected by the Holy Ghost. "Baptism is not a means of regeneration. . . . It does not confer the Holy Gost as a regenerating Spirit, but is the authentic token that the Holy Spirit has been, or will be, conferred, that regeneration has been, or will be, effected." (*Pop. Sym.*, §§ 260, 261.) According to this idea it is not the Holy Ghost who acts and operates through Baptism, but rather it is man who does something; namely, by submitting to baptism he shows that in some other mysterious way the Holy Ghost has regenerated him, or will yet regenerate him.

If this were so, there would certainly be no reason why children should be baptized, because there is no way we know of in which God might have imparted His Spirit and grace to little children for their regeneration, and therefore their baptism could not symbolize this regeneration unless it be assumed, and it is assumed, that "the infant of the believer obtains the regenerating grace by virtue of his birth and descent from a believer in covenant with God" (*Pop. Sym.*, § 261). This idea harks back to the old Jewish opinion that membership in the covenant of God is transmitted by natural birth from a believing parent and flatly contradicts the statement of Christ: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John 3:6. If Baptism is not a means through which the Holy Ghost effects regeneration but only a token that in some other way it has been effected, then we can well understand that it should be deferred until such a time when a person can give articulate confession of the regeneration that was wrought in him.

The indifference towards, and the neglect of, infant baptism which we find in many churches of our day have their root in the denial that Baptism is indeed a means of grace, through which God's Spirit is shed upon us abundantly to bestow on us grace and forgiveness and to work in the soul that faith whereby we accept these gifts and thus are regenerated. To convince them of their error, we must point to the command of Christ which tells us to disciple all nations, which certainly includes infants and children. We must show that all children are flesh born of flesh and do not inherit from their parents membership in the covenant of grace, but must themselves be born again of water and the Spirit if they are to enter the kingdom of God. Finally, they

must learn from the Bible that Baptism is the means through which God bestows grace and works regeneration in the heart. Whoever understands the Biblical teaching of the natural depravity of children and of the benefit and power of Baptism will not hesitate to have his children baptized.

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Holy Scripture or Christ?

In his *History of Christian Doctrine* G. P. Fisher points out that "among Protestants and Roman Catholics the old question respecting the seat of authority in religion is once more eagerly disputed. Since Coleridge and Schleiermacher insisted that the primary object of faith is not the Bible but Christ, there has been a growing tendency to regard the Scriptures less as an authoritative manual of revealed tenets in theology and morals than as the medium of disclosing to us the personal Christ and the import of His mission and teaching. The absolute inerrancy of Scriptural statements, especially in the narrative portions of the Bible, is no longer maintained in England and America by numerous theologians who are firmly attached to the principal doctrines of the Evangelical system" (p. 547). Is Christ the primary authority in religion, or is it Holy Scripture? In other words, is the source and fountain of the Christian faith (*fides quae creditur*), of the Christian doctrine, the Bible, or Christ? And that means, Is saving faith (*fides quae creditur*) based on the word of Scripture or on the word of Christ?

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Christ is the sole authority in religion. That goes without saying, among Christians. Only His Word counts, only His Word gives life. Christ Himself declared that "one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:10), and the Father's voice spoke out of the cloud: "This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him," Matt. 17:5. There can be no other authority: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," John 1:18. And these words of Christ are the source of life. They offer us the life eternal, gained for us by Christ; they create faith, and faith relies upon them. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," John 6:63. They give us confidence and assurance. We are sure of the forgiveness of our sins, because we have Christ's word for it.—There is but one authority in religion, so that "if any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing,"

1 Tim. 6:3 f. Saving faith has but one object, one foundation, one source, even Christ. The disciples declare: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," John 6:68.

Scripture is the sole authority in religion. That goes without saying, among the Bible Christians. "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," Luke 16:29. Men are seeking other authorities, but the Lord declares: "To the Law and to the Testimony! If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20), "surely there is no morning for them" (Rev. Vers.). "To the Law and to the Testimony"—that means "to Scripture." For "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine," 2 Tim. 3:16. And being the source of doctrine, it is the source and foundation of faith, for "the holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 3:16. The Bible Christians accept no other authority than that of Scripture. They declare: "We receive and embrace the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged." (Form. of Con., *Trigl.*, p. 851.) The Bible Christian Walther declares: "The Ev. Lutheran Church recognizes the written word of the apostles and prophets as the only and perfect source, rule, norm, and judge of all teaching." (*Walther and the Church*, p. 122, Thesis XIII.) The Bible Christian Krauth declares: "It is a fundamental principle of the Reformation that God's Word is the sole and absolute authority and rule of faith and of life, a principle without accepting which no man can be truly Evangelical, Protestant, or Lutheran." (*The Cons. Ref.*, p. 17.) And the written Word, the sole source of all teaching, is the sole source and the sole foundation of saving faith: "Faith is conceived from the Word." (*Apology*, *Trigl.*, p. 141.) We have no greater treasure in this world than the Bible. It is the Book of Truth, revealing the saving doctrine; and it is the Book of Life, creating saving faith.

Christ is our one and only authority. The Bible is our one and only authority. That means that whatever Christ would say to us, He says through Scripture. And whatever Scripture tells us, Christ tells us. It is Christ's Word we hear when we read our Bible. What the prophets wrote, they wrote not of themselves but by "the Spirit of Christ, which was in them," 1 Pet. 1:11. Asking us to accept "the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus Christ," Paul points to his epistles and declares: "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37. "What I write that is of the Lord.") And whatever power unto salvation inheres in the words of Christ,

which "are spirit and life," inheres in the word of the apostles: Men "shall believe on Me through their word," John 17:20. There is but one Master, one Teacher, but you can hear His voice nowhere but in Scripture. Holy Scripture is profitable unto doctrine, Scripture alone. Men shall believe in Christ through no other word than that of the apostles. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name," John 20:31. What men hear outside of, and apart from, Scripture is not the voice of Jesus. It is a Satanic delusion. In the words of Luther: "God will not permit us to rely on anything else, to place our trust on anything which is not Christ in His Word, let it be never so holy and full of spirit. Faith has no other foundation on which to stand. . . . Everything else is useless and futile. You are seeking Christ in vain. Only one thing will do, and that is that you turn away from yourself and all human comfort and throw yourself on the Word and nothing but the Word." (XI, pp. 453, 455.)

Christ is the chief, the only authority in religion. But we have to state just as emphatically: Holy Scripture is the chief, the only authority. When men ask, what is the primary object of your faith, what Christ says or what is written in Scripture? we ask them not to discuss a situation which does not exist. The authority that Christ wields is lodged in the Bible and nowhere else. It is only when we hear the Bible speaking that we hear Christ speaking. If a man says that Christ is his authority and says nothing else, he is saying absolutely nothing. And if in saying this he means to give Christ the primary place and the Bible the secondary place, he is putting Christ out of the only place where He may be found by men. There is only one authority in religion: Christ speaking in the Bible.

And Christ is speaking to us *everywhere* in the Bible. Let us emphasize this point in dealing with the question whether Christ or Scripture is the primary authority. There is not a single passage in Scripture from which men may appeal to the higher authority of Christ. Every word written in the Bible was spoken by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11); what Paul writes is "of the Lord," written by His authority, 1 Cor. 14:37. Moreover, *every word has to do with Christ*. Everything in the Bible is Christ. That is Luther's strong expression: "Thus the entire Scripture is throughout nothing but Christ, the Son of God and Mary's Son; all of it concerns Him. . . . Scripture is open to him who has the Son, and as his faith grows stronger and stronger, the light of Scripture shines the more brightly for him." (III, p. 1959.) Luther's expression is no stronger than that of St. Paul: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we

through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Luther and Paul are not saying that only some portions of Scripture deal with Christ, but they are saying that everything was written with a view to the creation and strengthening of faith and hope in Christ. When St. Paul said: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2), he did not mean to say that he preached only the Gospel, but he did say that whatever else he preached and wrote when he expounded the Law and dealt with historical matters, served the preaching of Christ, of the Gospel. Even so, when Moses related the story of creation and Matthew dealt in genealogies, they were driving forward to their real theme. The Bible contains, says the superficial theologian, much useless material, of no spiritual value. He would be right if these things stood by themselves. Says Luther: "*Tolle Christum e Scripturis, quid amplius in illis invenies?*" (Take Christ out of the Scriptures, and what will you find remaining in them?) (XVIII, p. 1681.) Or, as H. Sasse puts it: "Without this Gospel, the Scriptures would be either an unintelligible, fragmentary document of a chaotic history of religions or a revelation of the incomprehensible wrath of God." (*Here We Stand*, p. 115.) But you will no longer speak of useless material and a chaotic condition in the Bible if you accept the truth of Rom. 15:4 and say with Luther: "Christ is the center of the circle, and all stories in Holy Scripture, viewed aright, have to do with Christ." (VII, p. 1924.) Everything in the Bible has spiritual value; all Scripture is profitable for doctrine and every spiritual need (2 Tim. 3:16); and if you are ready to accept Christ as your Teacher, you will accept all that the Bible tells, for in all of it Christ is speaking.

But that would be making out of the Bible a manual of doctrine! And it would be putting Christendom under a yoke of legalism! We thank God that He has given us such a perfect manual, in which every doctrine is set down in clear, definite terms. Things would be in a chaotic condition if we had to wait till a conclave of theologians settled these terms. But are we bound to the letter of Scripture? Would that not be a legalistic procedure, demanding of us a slave mentality? You do not know your Bible, who speak of it as a taskmaster. Scripture requires of us indeed that we accept its teachings, unconditionally and absolutely; but in presenting these teachings, it exerts a divine power upon us, a gracious power, a gentle persuasion. Through these teachings it creates faith and willing obedience. "The Word of God is quick and powerful," Heb. 4:12. "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only but in power," 1 Thess. 1:5. "My preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God," 1 Cor. 2:4, 5. And remember that this powerful Word of God is nothing else than Scripture. Scripture and Word of God are interchangeable terms. *Scripture* is the Word of God that makes us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus, 2 Tim. 3:15.¹⁾ What Christian will say, when Scripture is creating in him willing acceptance of the saving truth and filling his heart with joy and happy obedience, that he is being enslaved and subjected to a hard "code"? Luther did not think so. To him "Scripture was the foundation and evidence of our faith." It "filled his heart with joy and happiness" (XI, p. 1025). And "if you take the Word of God away, that would be the same as taking the sun out of the world" (IV, p. 1806). Oh, how gladly we accept the instruction of Scripture, how joyfully we bow to its authority! The Word of *Christ* is not a heavy burden upon us. "To a careful hearer the message of Jesus in its purity still has the challenge of acceptance as an authoritative appeal. Its authority can be accepted or rejected, but the latter attitude does not destroy its authority. When the Word of Christ is accepted, men bow under its authority joyfully and gladly." (J. A. W. Haas, *The Truth of Faith*, p. 34.) This writer is speaking of the Word of Christ in contradistinction to Scripture. But what he says of the Word of Christ we say of *Scripture*. When the Christian reads Scripture, he declares: "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart," Ps. 19:8. He rejoices in the word of Scripture, because it is the Word of Jesus. We want to hear the voice of Jesus teaching us, comforting us, admonishing us, and we can hear Him only in Scripture. — The question "Is it Christ or is it Scripture that teaches the saving truth and implants it into the hearts?" is easily resolved by us. We do not set the two in opposition. As far as the instruction in divine revelation is concerned, Christ and Scripture are one.

2

Others make a distinction here — a fatal distinction. There are those — and they constitute the majority of present-day theologians — who say: Not Scripture but Christ! First go to Christ and then use whatever portions of Scripture you may find profitable! It seems incredible that Protestants in general, and

1) "The efficacy of the Bible is that property by which the Bible has indissolubly united with the true and genuine sense expressed in its words the power of the Holy Spirit, who has made it for all times the ordinary means by which He operates on and in the hearts and minds of those who properly hear and read it. Rom. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; Ps. 19:8; Rev. 1:3," etc. (A. Graebner, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 12.) Cf. Baier, I, p. 153: "*Scriptura habet vim aut potentiam activam, supernaturalem ac vere divinam, ad producendos supernaturales effectus, scilicet mentes hominum convertendas, regenerandas et renovandas,*" etc.

Lutherans in particular, should thus put Christ in opposition to Scripture. We submit a few statements, samples of many similar ones, to show that they are actually doing this.

W. Hermann: "It would be unchristian if this principle of the authority of Scripture adopted by the Evangelical Christianity meant the acknowledgment of any chance sentence of the Scriptures as God's word, by which a Christian ought to be guided in his life, and the community in its doctrine. Such a principle of the authority of Scripture would set a book above God's revelation, which we can receive only through personal influences, above all from the personal life of Christ. . . . What we should apprehend in the Scriptures as the indispensable means to salvation is what God is seeking to say to us through the personal life revealing itself there, and preeminently through the power of the person of Jesus." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 58 f.) A. Deissmann: "This dogma of verbal inspiration of every letter of the New Testament, which rightly can be called mechanical inspiration, is now abandoned in all scientific theology. . . . The only basis of our faith is the present living God, and Jesus Christ when He has become for us in some way or other a present and effective Reality." (*The New Testament*, etc., pp. 12, 174. See *C. T. M.*, I, p. 234.) Th. Harnack: "*Die Frage nach der Schrift ist darum immer erst die zweite; die erste ist und bleibt Christus.*" (See *Lehre u. Wehre*, 32, p. 346.) L. Ihmels: "Today also only that is real faith in Christ which is thrust upon man by the appearance of Christ Himself." (*Zentralfragen*, p. 89.) The Commission on Christian Doctrine (Episcopalian) states that "stages of Biblical revelation are to be judged in relation to its historical climax," the standard being "the mind of Christ as unfolded in the experience of the Church and appropriated by the individual Christian through His Spirit" (*The Living Church*, March 9, 1938). At the World Conference at Lausanne, 1927, the extreme Liberals expressed their teaching thus: "The object of our faith is not any statement about Christ but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."²⁾

2) Most certainly Christ is the object of saving faith. Most certainly we tell men: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," Acts 16:31. But when these men ask, What should we believe concerning Christ? we tell them: "Believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), accept by faith those wonderful "statements about Christ" which you will find only in Scripture, those statements containing the offer of the forgiveness of sins gained by Christ. And what happens? "So then faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17), not by hearing what some apparition is telling you, but by hearing the word of Scripture. — Consult Dr. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik*: "One party contends that justifying faith does not spring solely from the word of the Gospel and consequently does not have only the word of the Gospel for its object, but that faith springs primarily from 'historical impressions' and has for its object historical impressions and 'the facts of salvation' separate and apart from the Word of God. The other party

All of this sounds familiar. We have been hearing it here in America. *The Lutheran* of Nov. 22, 1928, declared: "We are not founded upon any book nor even on the Scriptures. Christianity is founded upon the living Christ." J. A. W. Haas: "It is not a set of writings nor the unity of the Scriptures as such and in themselves upon which we can rest as authority that is infallible apart from their connection and derivation from Jesus and the guidance of His Spirit. *The ever-living Christ is our infallible norm and standard.*" (*The Truth of Faith*, p. 38. Italics our own.) *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, April 1937: "What Luther meant by the Word of God, as is well known, was something different from the original words written by the original authors on the original parchment. It was the Word that was spirit and life, free and not bound. . . . There is a tendency to identify the object of faith with doctrines instead of with the *living Christ*, whom the doctrines are intended to set forth. This naturally happens where the Word of God is so identified with the written Scriptures that no differentiation is made between them" (Pp. 195, 194).³⁾

This modern teaching: Not Scripture but Christ, is nothing new. Schleiermacher indeed popularized it in this form, but it is an old heresy. John Goodwin, Independent († 1665), wrote: "Jesus Christ and not the Scriptures was the foundation of the Christian religion. . . . The true and proper foundation is not ink and paper, not any book or books, not writing or writings whatsoever, whether translations or originals, but that substance of matter, those glorious counsels of God concerning salvation of the world by Jesus Christ." (See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1931, p. 152.) And before him the "heavenly prophets" of Zwickau and the rest of that ilk had said the same in principle.

Just how these men who make Jesus, not Scripture, the source and foundation of saving knowledge, get into communication with Jesus, they do not tell us. John De Witt tries to tell us when he writes: "All historic, prophetic, and didactic revelation of God in the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is inferior and subordinate to His revelation of personal truth and grace in the Christ of the historic Gospel; and whatsoever the former may con-

teaches that any faith outside and apart from God's Word and promise is enthusiasm. . . . Therefore the Lutheran Confessions so strongly emphasize the fact that the object of justifying faith is the forgiveness of sins *offered in the Word*: *Diximus promissionem et fidem correlativa esse, and: Fides justificans est velle et accipere oblatam promissionem remissionis peccatorum et justificationis.*" (II, pp. 505, 537.)

3) "Not Scripture, but Christ" comes under the general heading of "Not Scripture, but the Word of God." The discussion of the concept "Word of God" as opposed to the word of Scripture must await another opportunity. It will suffice to point out here that the moderns are using these two terms ("Christ" and "Word of God") indiscriminately.

tain that is incongruous therewith, whatever be the explanation of the incongruity, is not to be held as authoritative for us, but is virtually superseded as an imperfect and provisional inspiration. . . . Let the disciple of Christ come closer to Christ in His pervasive, effluent, and communicative moral purity. Let him take John's position, pillowing his head on the Master's bosom, where he can hear His faintest whisper and feel every throb of His pure, tender, and loving heart, and he will come to a better mind. . . . We go fearlessly, therefore, to the old inspiration, approving or rejecting it, as it may be." (*What Is Inspiration?* pp. 168, 180.) That is a fine Christian phrase: "pillowing his head on the Master's bosom." On Jesus' bosom we find comfort and rest. But resting on the bosom of Jesus, you will never hear a voice telling you to reject certain portions of Holy Scripture. And where will you find Jesus apart from Scripture? The directions De Witt gives are just as hazy as those of Prof. John Oman, who, rejecting the authority of Scripture, says: "The true ambassador of Heaven sits in heavenly places, seeing visions and dreaming dreams" (*Vision and Authority*, p. 166), or those of Prof. J. F. Vichert, who says: "The ground of my confidence is not something written long ago, though that has helped me, . . . but a song, a light, a life, within my own soul" (*Watchman-Examiner*, Feb. 28, 1929). That is exactly what the "heavenly prophets" of Zwickau said.

So much is clear from the statements submitted that these men refused to accept the Bible as the primary, the chief, the only authority. We do not have to point that out to them. They are pointing it out to us. We shall enlarge on the disastrous results of such a theology later on. For the present we want to emphasize the fact that, according to their own statements, they have deposed the Bible as the chief and only authority. They have much to say in praise of the Bible; but submit to its authority absolutely? Never! — We know, of course, that it will be useless for us to quote 2 Tim. 3: 15 f.; 1 Tim. 6: 3 ff.; Is. 8: 20; etc., to them in this connection. That will make no impression on them. They will tell us to save our breath since they do not accept the Bible as the chief authority. They will ridicule us for operating with the obsolete method of quoting Bible-texts. Well, let them, if they must. It will clarify the situation. We will know that we are dealing with men who think nothing of rejecting certain statements, certain portions of Scripture.

They tell us that very plainly. We submit a list of statements to that effect. These statements are of the same general nature as the preceding ones, but emphasize the teaching that the authority of the Bible ceases where the alleged authority of Christ sets in. That is to say, on the authority of Christ or of the Spirit of Christ

or of the Gospel of Christ or whatever other term may be used, certain portions of Scripture must be ruled out; not every word of the Bible counts, but only such words as are stamped with the authority of Jesus.

Dr. De Witt told us that a moment ago. Read once more the first part of his statement. The Bible contains incongruities, which are no longer authoritative for us! W. A. Brown: "But if the Bible records such widely different stages of spiritual development, how are we to discriminate between them? How can we tell what part of the Bible is revelation and what is setting? There is one very simple and effective way to do this. It is to bring everything the book contains into touch with the central personality in whom the story culminates—the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Beliefs That Matter*, p. 226.) H. F. Rall: "Is not the authority of the Bible gone if we cannot say of every word that it is the Word of God? . . . The final authority for our faith is God, and God alone. The Bible is authority for us only in so far as it brings God, only so far as through the Spirit of God it wakens conviction in our heart. . . . The Bible has a center toward which the old tends from which the new flows—Jesus Christ. Bring all else to that test, make Him supreme." (*A Faith for Today*, p. 232.)⁴ E. Brunner: "It is well known how Luther himself freely criticized the writings of the Old and the New Testament, without being in the least shaken in his faith. When he used his critical understanding, he did what the pearl-fisher does when he wipes away the sand from his new-found pearl to uncover its pure whiteness. He removed what covered the meaning of God's Word. . . . It is like chiseling off the incrustations of the past from the old inscription, to make it legible. No doubt we have to chisel off much more than Luther believed necessary, but the inscription has remained the same: Jesus Christ, the Word of God." (*The Word and the World*, p. 102.) E. Schaeder: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible-word. Through this sifting process it gets the Word of God, the Word of Christ, to which it pneumatically adheres." (*Theozentrische Theologie*, II, p. 69.) F. Holmstroem: "Die Spitze [von P. Althaus'] Darlegung der 'Methode der Eschatologie' ist ja eigentlich gegen die schlendrianmaessige biblizistische Reproduktion der apokalyptischen Vorstellungen gerichtet. . . . Eine theologisch haltbare Eschatologie muss vielmehr ihre Aussagen organisch aus dem lebendigen Zentrum der biblischen Offenbarung, der 'Christustatsache,' herleiten." (*Das Eschatologische Denken der Gegenwart*,

4) Both Luther and Rall put Christ in the center of the Bible. But Luther goes on to show that therefore everything in the Bible is of value; Rall, however, finds therein his authority to discard much of the Bible.

p. 312.) That is to say, the single texts treating of eschatology (or any other doctrine) are not decisive. What counts is the living center, "die Christustatsache." If an individual statement of the Bible does not agree [in your judgment] with "Christ," with the fact that Christ lived and died, etc., you may discard it.⁵⁾

5) Let us take time to discuss the term "*schlendrianmaessige bibli-zistische Reproduktion*." When we base our teaching on proof-texts, these men look down upon us as backward Biblicists and charge us with taking things too easy, adhering to the old slovenly methods of Scripture-interpretation. Study the Bible, these men say, but you need something better than proof-texts to get the sense of its teaching. A writer in the *Christian Century* of Feb. 22 says: "Back to the Bible! I am convinced that we are to fall short of the necessary spiritual resilience which this day demands, unless we rediscover the sources of spiritual power in the Bible." He goes on to speak of "the inexhaustible resources of beauty and grandeur, of sharp insight and sweeping profundity that crowd the pages of the New Testament. There's a book!" But he hastens to declare: "This does not mean that we shall be saved by a return to proof-texting. Perish the thought!" Proof-texts!? "No fundamental doctrine rests on a single isolated passage. Nor may several passages strung together in proof-text fashion fix faith. It requires the analogy of Scripture, the whole Scripture corroborating and authenticating its own testimony in the life of the true Church, to establish the truth as it is in Christ Jesus." (Dr. E. E. Flack, in *The Lutheran*, Oct. 11, 1936.) These men look down with infinite contempt on the Biblicists who say: "That the question of inspiration is of vital importance for the Christian Church is easily seen. If she has a definite and authoritative body of Scripture to which she can go, it is a comparatively easy task to formulate her doctrine. All she has to do is to search out the teachings of Scripture and embody them in her creed." (L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 10.) No, say the moderns, it is not so easy as all that. That would make theology too simple a matter. Much more is required than the study of simple proof-texts. They have the same contempt for Luther, who also dealt with proof-texts. Luther, too, said that it is an easy matter for the Church to establish her doctrines, for there are the clear passages of Scripture! "There is no clearer book upon earth than is Holy Writ. . . . Some passages in Scripture are obscure, but in these you find nothing but what is found in other places, and in clear and plain passages. . . . So the fathers fought them [the heretics] with the clear passages." (V, p. 334 f.) When Luther had found one single proof-text, he was sure of his case and declared: "The text stands there too mightily." (XV, p. 2050.) Poor, backward Luther, piddling around in theology, imagining that he is getting anywhere with his proof-texts! *Solch ein Schlendrian!* Zwingli used to scoff at Luther for clinging to "*fuenf arme und elende Worte*." The moderns deride him for staking his doctrine, his salvation, on a string of insignificant proof-texts, and Luther answers: "They are revealing what kind of spirit is in them and how much they think of God's Word, ridiculing these precious words as five poor, miserable words; they do not believe that they are God's words. For if they believed that they are God's words, they would not call them miserable, poor words, but would prize one tittle and letter more highly than the whole world." (XX, p. 1040.) And what is that great and strenuous work, calling for the best effort and deepest thought of the theologian, far surpassing the piddling, easy-going, slovenly method of the proof-text theologian? They say: "Theology must derive its truths out of the living center of the Biblical revelation, out of the '*Christustatsache*.'" G. Wehrung says: "Der evangelische Schriftgebrauch sucht nicht Lehrformeln oder Beweisstellen (proof-texts) dafuer, sondern lebenweckende Zeugnisse; er sucht in und hinter diesen mannigfachen Christusbekannt-

W. C. Berkemeyer had declared in the *Alleman Commentary* that he disagrees with St. Paul's "allegorical exegesis of Genesis" and "the belief in the literal historicity of the Biblical account of creation of man and woman" and that he "doubts the traditional Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles." He was taken to task for this, but insists that he has the right to reject certain statements of Scripture on the principle "that we judge Scripture by Christ." (See *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1938, p. 67 f.)

One can hardly trust his eyes. Have Christian theologians written these things? The Church has indeed come upon evil times. The majority of her leading theologians, liberals and conservatives, Reformed and Lutheran, is claiming the right, and exercising it to the full, of revising the sacred oracles of God, of deleting great portions, sifting the wheat from the chaff, chiseling off the incrustations, removing the blemishes, and discarding the harmful elements — and they insist that they are doing this on the authority of Christ!

They also appeal to Luther as their authority for treating

nissen die innere Einheit, das eine Evangelium, das eine Gotteswort in den vielen Worten. . . . Eine gesetzliche Benutzung einzelner Sätze oder gar der ganzen Schrift kann dem Glauben nicht in den Sinn kommen; er muss ueberall die Linien zum Mittelpunkt ziehen, aus allen Stimmen den einen evangelischen Klang heraus hoeren." (*Geschichte und Glaube*, p. 306.) H. Wheeler Robinson says: "The revelation must be sought in that experience which God has made the medium of His revelation, in its entirety, rather than in particular 'texts' taken from it. . . . We may confidently claim that the fuller recognition of mediation, by throwing us back on the inner content of the revelation instead of its literary expression and record, is part of the unceasing providence of God over His people." (*The Chr. Experience of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 170, 175.) And it is not an easy matter to establish what revelation "in its entirety" really reveals. F. Buechsel tells us: "Selbstverstaendlich kommt diese Bedeutung ['Wort Gottes'] nicht einer Anzahl aus dem Neuen Testament herausgehobener Worte zu, sondern nur seinem Gesamtzeugnis," and then warns us: "Dies Gesamtzeugnis des Neuen Testaments zu erheben, erfordert ein betraechtliches Mass theologischer Arbeit." (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, p. 112.) To get at the sense of revelation "in its entirety," of the Gesamtzeugnis, calls for an adept. We have always thought that it takes the best efforts of the Christian theologian to lift the treasures which these simple proof-texts carry. But now come the moderns, the adepts, and engage themselves to do better, more thorough work than that of piddling, slovenly Luther. Yes, better work than that of St. Paul. For the "literary expression," the words of Paul, as Robinson just told us, is inadequate. Go back of the "literary expression" to get the inner content of the revelation! — What intolerable conceit! Luther describes their conceit thus: "Grund und Ursach solches ihres Duenkels (conceit) ist erstlich, dass man diese Worte 'Das ist mein Leib' (the proof-text!) 'muesse aus den Augen tun und zuvor durch den Geist die Sache bedenken. . . . Da hast du eine gewisse Regel, die dich besser leitet in alle Wahrheit, denn der Heilige Geist selber tun kann, naemlich, wo die Heilige Schrift deinen Duenkel irret oder hindert, da tue sie aus den Augen, und folge zuerst deinem Duenkel, so triffst du den rechten Weg gewiss aller Dinge fein." (XX, p. 1022.) The word which St. Paul uses in this connection is *τερόφωται*, 1 Tim. 6:4.

Holy Scripture in this way. They say that Luther set up the principle that only those portions of Scripture are authoritative which deal with Christ—"was Christum treibet." They found these words in Luther's Preface to the Epistle of St. James and St. Jude: "All the genuine sacred books agree in this, that all of them preach Christ and deal with Him." (Lay emphasis on Him [*Christum treiben*].) "That is the true test by which to judge all books, when we see whether they deal with Christ or not, since all the Scriptures show us Christ, Rom. 3:21, and St. Paul will know nothing but Christ, 1 Cor. 2:2." (XIV, p. 129. Translation from the Holman edition of Luther's works.) Hiding behind Luther's name, the moderns, liberals and conservatives, Reformed and Lutheran, insist that the criterion of truth is not: What is written? but: *Was treibt Christum?* We submit a list of statements which develop the general theme "Not Scripture, but Christ" in this particular form: Only those portions of Scripture are profitable which—according to the judgment of the masters—deal with Christ; the rest of Scripture can safely be junked.

Lic. Dr. Stier (Breslau): "Holy Scripture is 'the Word of God' inasmuch and so far as it is the record mediating the divine revelation of salvation (Luther: *Gottes Wort ist, 'was Christum treibet'*)." (Ev.-Luth. Freikirche, May 13, 1928.) P. Althaus: "Hier wie dort sind wir in dem Hoeren auf das Wort Gottes in dem biblischen Wort von diesem letzteren als Menschenworte auch frei." Footnote: "Es handelt sich also um das Verhaeltnis des Wortes zu den Worten, des Apostolischen im Sinne Luthers ('was Christum treibet') zu dem gesamten Inhalt der biblischen Schriften." (*Die letzten Dinge*, p. 61.) G. Wehrung (Tuebingen): "In unuebertrefflicher Weise hat Luther den Pruefstein fuer alle Schriften darin gefunden, ob sie Christum treiben oder nicht." But, adds Wehrung, Luther did not go far enough. What Luther's alleged principle involves is this: "Wir muessen aber in tieferem Sinn mit Luther und seinem Freiheitsgeist einig bleiben, indem wir alles Schriftwort danach abschaetzen, ob es das Evangelium rein und ungetruemt zum Ausdruck bringt." We are in accord with Luther and his spirit of freedom only then, if we apply this test to all words of Scripture: Do they express the Gospel as gospel clearly and purely? (*Geschichte und Glaube*, p. 307 f.) C. Stange: "In diesem Sinne ist auch die Formel Luthers gemeint, dass die Schrift Gottes Wort sei, soweit sie Christum treibt. . . . Es wird damit ein Massstab fuer das, was an dem Inhalt der Schrift wesentlich ist, aufgestellt." (*Dogmatik*, I, p. 195.) E. Brunner: "Luther, perhaps the most congenial interpreter of Scripture the Church has ever had, explicitly asserted the subordination of the Scripture to Christ in such well-known utterances as these: . . . 'The Scrip-

tures are apostolic and canonical in so far as they teach Christ and no further.' "Luther would never have approved of the opinion of later orthodoxy that everything in the Scriptures is equally inspired by the Holy Spirit." "No doubt we have to chisel off much more than Luther believed necessary." (*The Word and the World*, pp. 84, 102.) H. C. Alleman: "It must have been along lines like these that Luther came to his test of Scripture: 'Herein agree all the genuine holy books, that they all preach and exhibit Christ.' The Bible contains the Word of God. It is the rule of our faith because it enshrines this Word. Luther saw that it was this which made it an inspired book, without the necessity of claiming for it verbal inspiration. He is not the author of that theory. The Bible is not of uniform value and perspicuity. It has carried with it the husk as well as the kernel. There are many things in the Old Testament and some in the New Testament which are temporal and even provincial. When we read Old Testament stories of doubtful ethics," etc. (*Luth. Church Quart.*, July, 1936, p. 240.) Alleman and Brunner and Stier and the rest have subscribed to the Declaration of Independence of the Authority of Scripture proclaimed by the Eisenach convention of 1917: "Gebunden und doch frei! Gebunden an das Ganze der Offenbarung in der Schrift, gebunden an den Christus Gottes, den die Schrift treibt, aber frei gegenueber Einzelheiten, frei in der Beurteilung der menschlichen Huellen, in die die Gottesherrlichkeit der Schrift verkleidet ist. Bound, yet free! Bound to the revelation within the Scriptures taken as a whole; bound to the Christ of God whom the Scriptures urge. But free with respect to particulars, free to form our opinion of the human garments making the divine glory of the Scriptures." (See *Theol. Monthly*, V, p. 6.)⁶⁾

6) Did Luther set up the canon that only those portions of Scripture which—according to the opinion of the master theologians—deal with Christ are inspired and authoritative? If he did, he was wrong and we should be doing wrong in following him. But he did nothing of the kind. He is not discussing the question whether everything in Scripture is God's inspired Word, but the question of the canon of Scripture—which books constitute the canon? Some of the writers just quoted are free to admit this. They admit it by declaring that Luther was at fault in not subjecting Scripture ("*alles Schriftwort*," "all words of Scripture") to the test: Does it deal with Christ? The question before Luther was whether James and Jude belong in the canon. He doubted it. Others before him have doubted it. James and Jude were always in the class of the *antilegomena*. Whether the test that Luther here applied (Do these books preach Christ?) is the proper one does not concern us now. The question before us is: Does Luther say that certain portions of Scripture are chaff, husk, blemishes, mistakes, and are seen to be such in that they do not deal with Christ? His words must be twisted unmercifully to make them say this. Why, in this very passage he states emphatically: "All the Scriptures show us Christ." He had to say this, because Rom. 15:4 says it. He said: "Scripture forms a harmonious whole, and all examples, histories, yea, the entire Scripture, in all its parts, aims at this,

It passes belief. Here are men who are ever harping on the authority of Jesus; but when Jesus declares: "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), they coolly renounce His authority. Jesus declares that not a single statement of Scripture may be annulled, denied, deleted, put aside; every single word is authoritative. (See Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, pp. 158, 258, 266 f. L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 28. Kretzmann, *The Foundations Must Stand*, p. 40.) But these men say: We know better than Jesus what is fit and proper. Jesus asks us to stake everything on the authority of Scripture and accept everything in Scripture as profitable for doctrine; He should have known that there are many things in Scripture that are unimportant and even harmful.

We submit a final series of statements which use instead of the concepts "Christ" and "*was Christum treibet*" the term "Gospel" or the more general terms: "saving truth," "spiritual content," or "spirit," opposed to letter.⁷⁾ These statements express the idea

that we should learn Christ." (III, p. 18.) He said: "The entire Scripture is throughout nothing but Christ." (III, p. 1959.) He said: "All stories in Holy Scripture, viewed aright, have to do with Christ." (VII, p. 1924.) He said: "Thou must not think or wonder why the Holy Ghost delights in describing such paltry and contemptible things, but listen to what St. Paul says Rom. 15:4: 'Whatsoever things. . .'. If we firmly believed that the Holy Ghost Himself and God, the Creator of all, is the true Author of this Book, we should find the greatest comfort therein." (II, p. 469.) And Alleman and Brunner cannot make us believe that in this Preface to James Luther wanted to say the very contrary. And did Luther himself ever apply this alleged canon of his? Where did he say that such and such a passage must be separated from the true Scriptures because it does not deal with Christ? Luther will give you a hundred dollars if you can find, say in his exposition of Gen. 1 a statement to the effect: Out it goes, for it does not urge Christ. He will give you another hundred dollars if you can find him saying, in writing on the imprecatory psalms: Out they go, for they do not reflect the mind of Christ. — See further C. T. M., IX, p. 383; Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 353; Hoenecke, *Ev.-Luth. Dog.*, I, p. 362 (there W. Walther [Rostock] is quoted: Luther recognized open questions respecting the extent of the canon, but as to the canonical books, they possessed for him absolute authority, as being the inspired Word of God); C. F. W. Walther in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 8 ("We pass over those who here bring up Luther's judgment concerning the antilegomena [St. James, etc.] as proving Luther's alleged liberality on the question of inspiration, since even the weakest intellect will see at once how foolish it is to make a disparaging judgment of Luther concerning a writing which he did not look upon as canonical express a liberal view concerning the inspiration of the canonical books; the very opposite is expressed in such a judgment.") — Hans Asmussen speaks of those who are always ready to trot out Luther's statement in the Preface to St. James in this wise: "Ueber die Grenzen, in welchen Gottes Reden nach Ansicht Luthers in der Bibel sich vollzieht, ist das bekannte Lutherzitat von der Schrift, 'soweit sie Christum treibet,' mit besonderer Inbrunst in allen Lagern kolportiert worden," and then he quotes Luther, IX, 655; III, 21; III, 1890; VI, 742; VII, 1111, etc. (*Zwischen den Zeiten*, 1928, p. 31.)

7) All these terms are used interchangeably. Luthardt for instance uses them thus in this statement: "Th. Harnack geht nun auf die falsche unlutherische" (!) "Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift ein, demgemäss man

that not everything in the Bible is God's Word, trustworthy and authoritative; that, since Christ is the only authority, only the Gospel portions of the Bible are authoritative. Following the lead of Calixt, who restricted inspiration to the saving truths (*Heilswahrheiten* — see Luthardt, *Compendium*, p. 117), O. Kirn says: "Aus diesem Grundsatz folgt nicht nur die Beschraenkung der Schriftautoritaet auf das Gebiet der *Heilswahrheit*, sondern auch das abgestufte Verhaeltnis des Alten und Neuen Testaments innerhalb des Schriftganzen." (*Grundriss*, p. 30.) H. Martensen: "In the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century the Scriptures are regarded as a book of laws; and the individual Christian, not maintaining a relative independence over against the Scriptures, is unable to distinguish in the Scriptures between the *essential and the incidental* and practises a genuine relic-worship towards the letter of the Bible." (*Chr. Dog.*, p. 45.) We heard Wehrung declare that we must apply this test to all words of Scripture: Do they express the *Gospel*? J. A. W. Haas: "What the theologian calls the Word of God, namely, the *spiritual content* of the Bible, is an authority of freedom." (*What Ought I to Believe*, p. 30.) M. G. G. Sherer: "Christian liberty knows how to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the shell and the content, between the chaff and the wheat, between the *letter and the spirit*. . . . Christian liberty does not fall into the sin of Bibliolatry." (*Chr. Liberty and Chr. Unity*, p. 81.) V. Ferm: "The authority of the Sacred Writings is no longer found in 'the letter' and sustained by some artificial theory of divine inspiration, but in the appeal to the *spiritual content*. . . . To us the 'Word of God' is the validly spiritual content which rises unmistakably in Scriptural utterances and in the pronouncement of Christ-like seers" (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 294.) H. C. Alleman: "What is infallible in the Bible? The good news, or the *Gospel*, of God, which God revealed in the prophets and fulfilled in the Christ. . . . We must do what Luther said in a homely but penetrating sentence: 'The pure Scriptures must be separated from their dregs and filth, which it has ever been my aim to do, that the divine truths may be looked upon in one light and trifles of men in another.'" (*The Lutheran*, Jan. 14, 1937. — This matter is examined in *C. T. M.*, VIII, p. 542 ff.) The Declaration of the U. L. C. A. on "The Word of God and the Scrip-

sie, anstatt vor allem Christum, zum Grund und Eckstein des Glaubens und zur Offenbarung selbst macht. . . . Danach bemisst sich auch die Irrtumslosigkeit der Heiligen Schrift als eine nach der eigentlichen Abzweckung der Schrift zu verstehende und zu bemessende. 'Die Schrift,' sage ich mit Volck, 'ist eben etwas Besseres als ein Buch ohne Fehler'; so dass also *ausser der Heilsoffenbarung* die Moeglichkeit irrtuemlicher Zeitvorstellungen und dergleichen von vornherein vorauszusetzen ist." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 37, p. 277.)

tures": "III. We believe that in its most real sense the Word of God is the Gospel, i. e., the message concerning Jesus Christ, His work, His teaching," etc. . . . "V. We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation."⁸⁾

Two generations ago Robert Ingersoll traveled up and down the land, lecturing on "The Mistakes of Moses." He held the Holy Scriptures up to scorn for the alleged mistakes, contradictions, and immoral teachings they contained. He was an avowed agnostic, infidel. How the times have changed! Today we hear Christian theologians speaking of the mistakes of Moses and the prophets and the apostles, of the chaff and husk and filth found in the Bible, of the mistaken scientific beliefs and backward culture and immoral ethical teaching of the sacred writers. And they are doing that, they say, under the authority of Jesus! The Bible must be subjected to a thorough cleansing, sifting, winnowing process in order that the purity of the teaching of Jesus might be preserved.

And what is the result of all of this as it affects the question before us? (We are discussing the question: Is Holy Scripture the primary authority or is it Christ?) If the men who make Christ the primary authority are right in their contention and arguments, a terrible situation ensues. Those who substitute for the authority of Scripture the authority of Jesus or subordinate the authority of Scripture to that of Jesus, leave us without any authority. Let us look into that more closely.

TH. ENGELDER

(To be concluded)

8) Dr. A. J. Traver points out, in *The Lutheran* of Feb. 22, that the U. L. C. Declaration restricts the authority and infallibility of the Bible to the Gospel-message. Interpreting the Declaration for the Young People, he states: "This whole revelation of God to man, completed in Jesus Christ, is faithfully recorded and preserved in the Holy Scriptures and comes to us alone through them. *They are the infallible truth in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.*" Italicizing this sentence, Dr. Traver is informing his readers that the Declaration does not mean to say that every statement of Scripture is true. To make that clear, he adds another paragraph: "Does not modern science contradict the Scriptures? God did not inspire the writers of the Scriptures to know all truth. He gave men minds to use in investigation and discovery. For instance, the laws governing the use of airplanes have been learned through the painful processes of many years. It is not necessary that men should know how to fly in order to be saved from their sins. Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs. *The one thing that they were called to do was to reveal God to men.*" (Italics in original.) The statement of the Declaration "We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures in all its parts is the Word of God" does not mean that all parts and statements of the Bible are true, for did not the holy writers write false scientific beliefs into the Bible? Only the Gospel portions are true and profitable. The rest is husk, shell, chaff.

The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions

A Translation of Dr. C. F. W. Walther's Article Entitled "Die falschen
Stuetzen der modernen Theorie von den offenen Fragen,"
Lehre und Wehre, XIV (1868)

(Continued)

[In support of our rejection of the theory sponsored in the quotations submitted, we point to the following:]

In the first place, it is not true that our dogmas come into existence gradually and that hence there are articles of faith "which are still in the process of formation, and others which as yet have either not at all or merely by way of beginning been drawn into the stream of events in which dogmas take shape." It is not true that some articles of faith have come down to us "as undecided, unfinished questions, incomplete structures, as open questions," because concerning these things one does not yet find unanimous agreement in the Lutheran Church. This theory, held and advocated with more or less emphasis by almost all modern theologians, though entirely unknown to the old orthodox theologians of our Church, we consider the *πρωτον ψευδος* of modern theology; as we view it, it is merely a daughter of Rationalism appearing in Christian dress, a sister of Romanism hiding behind a Protestant mask, and a fruitful mother of large families of heresies. With respect to the Rationalists it is well known that they were the first to describe dogmas not as the unchangeable, divine, fundamental truths of Christianity but as doctrinal opinions which had arisen in a scientific process or which had been elevated by the various denominations to the position of ecclesiastical teaching and were considered authoritative in the respective age. For this reason they strictly distinguished between doctrines of the Church and of the Bible; the former they looked upon as a presentation of beliefs of the Church which come and go and are subject to constant change, the latter as a presentation of the eternal Christian doctrine, having validity for all time, although, of course, they identified these eternal doctrines with the thin, watery soup cooked in the kitchen of their own common sense. One of the chief representatives of this crass Rationalism, Bretschneider, writes, for instance: "We must distinguish between Christian theology" (which in the mind of Bretschneider is Rationalism) "and dogmatic, a distinction based on the name itself, for *δόγμα* means *placitum*, opinion, and that correctly describes dogmatic. It represents the subjective view of individual parties or teachers. As soon as these subjective views were fixed by some public authority, public dogmatic arose, which, using the word

in the wider sense, might be called a presentation of the teachings submitted in the various confessions. This process started in the third century and was carried on through the Christian councils and the confessions, or symbols, which they sanctioned. Dogmatic was enlarged when various churches and parties arose which publicly stated their opinion concerning Christian teaching." In the following Bretschneider, however, admits that after the Reformation dogmatic was regarded in our Church as identical with Christian or Biblical theology. (*Handbuch der Dogm. der ev.-luth. K. von Bretschneider*. Reutlingen, 1823. I:24 f.) Essentially Schleiermacher did not change this rationalistic view when he began his dogmatic with these words: "Dogmatic theology is the science pertaining to the relation of the various doctrines obtaining at a certain time in a Christian denomination." He then proceeds: "Every presentation of doctrine, regardless of its comprehensiveness and perfection, in the course of time loses its original significance and retains merely a historical importance. For unnoticeable changes take place all the time wherever there is a lively exchange of thought; changes depend on various factors making for development." (*Der christl. Glaube*. Reutlingen, 1828. I:11, 12.) In calling the theory of a successive development of doctrine as taught by modern theologians a daughter of Rationalism coming in a Christian dress, we, of course, do not intend to impute to these men the view that the dogmas of the Church are nothing but temporary opinions having the sanction of church-bodies. What we wish to maintain is merely that the view prevailing at present, holding doctrines to be merely the results of historical movements, is of rationalistic origin. No proof is needed to show that Roman Catholics also teach the gradual rise of dogma; but a few years ago we beheld the spectacle of the present Pope's declaring the teaching of the Virgin Mary's immaculate conception, which before had been considered an open question, to be a dogma and now binding for all "believers," and just now, according to reports, the alleged heir of Peter's episcopal throne is preparing to enrich his Church again through a new dogma by decreeing his own infallibility. While modern Lutheran theologians are far removed from the position which would vindicate the right of the Roman Church or even the Pope to create new articles of faith, their theory that dogmas come into existence gradually, that on certain points a "unanimous consensus" arises, or that the Church has finally "pronounced" and "decided" with respect to such matters, is nothing but a sister of Romanism, having put on a Protestant mask.

There are especially two reasons why an orthodox Christian cannot adopt but must decidedly reject this theory. In the first

place, this theory opposes the clear teaching of the Word of God that the Church at all times is one, and one only. Clearly and definitely Christ says: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd," John 10:16. This *unitas ecclesiae* which all Christendom confesses in the Nicene Creed is before everything else a unity in the doctrine of faith. In this point substantially even the Church of the Old Testament is one with that of the New Testament. Peter says at the first apostolic council: "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they," Acts 15:11, and Paul testifies before Agrippa: "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come," Acts 26:22; cf. 13:32, 33. How otherwise could Christ and the apostles have justly appealed to the Old Testament with respect to all teachings they proclaimed and have asked their hearers to examine according to this norm everything that they preached (John 5:39, 45-47; Acts 17:11) if they had set forth a new doctrine of faith not yet revealed to the Jewish Church in the writings of the Old Covenant? If we accordingly have to believe that even the Old and New Testament churches in their teachings are one, how much more is this true of the Church of the New Testament in its various periods of existence! Paul states clearly that the Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets," Eph. 2:20. This foundation of the apostles and prophets, however, is nothing else than the total number of articles of faith taught by the apostles and prophets. Clear, furthermore, is the expression of the apostle in which he terms the Church the mother of all believers, Gal. 4:26. This position, however, the Church holds because it possesses, preserves, and uses that doctrine through which men are brought to the knowledge of the true saving faith and are kept in it, and because in this manner the Church constantly perpetuates itself. Referring to the faith of the Church in general, the Scriptures speak of "one faith," Eph. 4:5; they furthermore do not point to it as something which the Church would have to seek, to discover, and to acquire through a struggle, but they refer to it as the faith which was once delivered unto the saints and for which the Church would have to contend, Jude 3. While in the Word of God the true disciples of Christ, or the true members of the Church, are represented as the people that know the truth, John 8:32, it is merely the hypocrites, outwardly joined to the Church, who are described as people that are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. 3:7. The modern theory, however, which holds that dogmas are formed gradually,

makes the Church a philosophical school, whose task it is eternally to be looking for the truth, while according to the Word of God the Church is the mistress ("Hausehre") to whom the truth has been entrusted as her most precious treasure, as the good thing which has been committed unto her to keep it by the Holy Ghost, 2 Tim. 1:13, 14; 1 Tim. 6:20. Through this theory the Church is made to resemble the human being who after his birth is still unconscious, gradually, however, as the years progress, becomes conscious of his environments, gathers knowledge, and by and by arrives at the state of maturity, while according to the testimony of the apostle the Corinthian Church, for instance, was already in the apostolic age enriched "in all utterance and in all knowledge," so that the Corinthian Christians "did not come behind in any gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 1:5, 7. It is true that the Word of God prophesies, and the history of the Church confirms, that the Church does not always stand before us in the same brilliant light of pure public preaching, that it rather, to use the figure of the ancients, in this respect decreases and increases like the moon, that it experiences times of special gracious visitation and then again declines. But it is an error to say that the Church from century to century accumulates an ever-growing fund of divine teachings and according to the law of historical development arrives at constantly enhanced depths and riches of knowledge. We admit that the Church all the time, through "men that arise in its midst and who speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them," Acts 20:30, is compelled to formulate with increasing precision the pure doctrine which it possesses in order that the fraudulent errorists may be unmasked and false teachings be kept from creeping into it through ambiguous phraseology; but this does not imply that the number of its dogmas grows; they are through this activity merely safeguarded ever more carefully against the danger of becoming perverted. That Christ is ὁμοούσιος with the Father, that the union of the divine and human nature in Christ took place ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως, that Mary was θεοτόκος, that "in, with, and under" the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper Christ's body and blood are actually present, are given, and are orally received by worthy and unworthy communicants,—these are, it is true, dogmatic expressions which were not found in the orthodox Church till the days of Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and Zwingli; but they are not new dogmas. Furthermore, we do not deny that through continued searching of the Scriptures by the Church some things are by and by cleared up which before, through imperfect acquaintance with the languages and history, had been unknown; we admit that in this manner the content of the various doctrines

of faith at times is set forth and unfolded in a higher degree than before and that from this point of view we may indeed speak of a progress in knowledge. But this by no means implies the gradual origin and increase of dogmas which modern theology teaches; we must rather say that through this course that which already is known receives new confirmation, or the Church becomes aware of certain inferences and corollaries of its dogmas which it had not noticed before. It must not be forgotten that it is by agreement with the Church of all ages in matters of doctrine, that is, by the so-called *successio doctrinalis*, that the Church of any given period must prove itself not to be a new, a false Church, but a part of the Church universal.

That our Church never entertained the idea of a gradual formation of dogmas but that this notion arose in the period of decay, hardly requires any proof. At the conclusion of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession our Church expressly appeals not only to its agreement with Holy Scripture, but with "the Church catholic" (*ecclesia catholica*), yes, even with the old "Roman" Church "as known from its writers." Hence the authors declare [in the German version] they hold their "opponents cannot be at variance with them in these articles." How emphatically Luther stresses his agreement with the old Church and how he again and again asserts that all dogmas which he teaches are not new but that the Church of the Reformation has remained loyal to the old Church and its teachings, that contrariwise the papistic Church has defected from the old Church and its teachings and has become a new and therefore a false Church, is well known. Let the reader compare the elaborate proof which Luther submits in his essay against Duke Heinrich von Braunschweig, in which he among other things, to quote merely a few brief sentences, writes: "We invent nothing new but stay with, and adhere to, the old Word of God as the Church possessed it; for this reason we with it constitute the true old Church, as one body, which teaches and believes one divine Word. Hence the papists again blaspheme Christ Himself, the apostles, and all Christianity by calling us innovators and heretics. For they do not find anything with us except the old treasure of the ancient Church, true likeness and complete unity with the latter." (XVII, 1659.) In another passage Luther writes: "The Christian Church is dispersed throughout the whole world; it believes as I believe, and I believe as it believes; we have no collision or discrepancy in our faith." (*Comments on John 7:40*; VII, 2347.) For this reason Luther says expressly: "We on our part have never asked for a council to reform our churches." (XVII, 1693.) Hence, while modern theologians consider the history of dogma at best as the

history of the formation of dogma and treat it as such, the old orthodox theologians treating this subject rather manifest the tendency to furnish the proof that the true doctrine always was to be found in the Church and that we Lutherans therefore, on the basis of the *successio doctrinalis*, may well make the claim that our congregations are orthodox. Hence Heinrich Eckhart, for instance, in the title of his patristic compendium, characterizes this work as one "in which the agreement of pious antiquity with the confession of our churches is demonstrated in every article of theological instruction, and the clamor of the opponents alleging newness of doctrine on our part is proved false." (*Compendium Theol. Patrum*, etc. Jenae, 1606.) To give another example, J. W. Baier, in the foreword of his excellent *History of Dogma*, defines this branch of theological study thus: "It is historical theology which reports the doctrine of religion and the treatment accorded it in the various generations and periods in order that a person may thereby convince himself of the unbroken preservation of the true doctrine and of the succession of the true Church." (*Compend. Theol. Historicae*. Vinariae, 1699.)

The attitude of our Church toward the modern theory of dogmatic evolution may furthermore be gathered from the attributes with which our Church invests articles of faith. H. Kromayer, for instance, writes: "We promise, 1. that the articles which one must know to be saved are articles belonging to all times, that is, that they are found in both the Old and the New Testament, just as the apostle says Eph. 4:5, 'one Lord, one faith' (that is, the faith which is believed, not *by* which one believes, faith in the objective sense, that is, the doctrine which is to be accepted by faith, is meant, and not subjective faith, which apprehends the merits of Christ and is differentiated from the objects to which it is directed"). (*Theol. Positivo-Polem.* Lips., 1677, p. 1.) Calovius ascribes seven attributes to the articles of faith: 1. truth and certainty; 2. sublimity, the quality of transcending the powers of apprehension of human reason; 3. incapability of being proved scientifically [*Inevidenz*]; 4. necessity; 5. connection with the way of salvation; 6. mutual relationship; 7. harmony. With respect to number 4 he states: "The articles of faith have to be believed, and hence they are unchangeable and always have the same quality, as far as that which is to be believed is concerned. . . . This necessity, however, is of various kinds." (*System*. I, 771 sq.)

Again, our orthodox theologians definitely reject the view that there is a gradual formation of articles of faith. With respect to the argument that no one can say that the articles of faith increase, Musaeus, for instance, states: "It does not matter that the view is expressed that the fundamental articles of faith in the

Church cannot increase. This we by no means deny; on the contrary, we all confess with one mouth that everything that one must believe to be saved was already taught orally by the apostles and that it was received into the Holy Scriptures and thus handed down in written form to posterity and that nothing deserves to be placed among the necessary articles of faith excepting that which is contained in Holy Scripture and on that basis was always taught in the catholic Church and always believed. This is true, even if an angel from heaven should teach something new and different, Gal. 1:8. But it is one thing to say that the fundamental articles cannot grow and another thing that the heresies which oppose the foundation of faith cannot grow. . . . The truth contained in each article of faith is one and simple. The error, however, through which it may, directly or indirectly, be shaken or subverted is of various kinds and complex. The primitive Church merely taught and expounded the truth in words that were sufficiently clear, without regard to foreign and subtle, at that time neither existent nor known, interpretations, which in the course of time the impiety of men has invented for the perversion of the true sense of Scripture. But after these perversions of Scripture had begun to invade the Church and thereby heresies had taken their rise, the teachers of the Church began to explain the truth of faith more distinctly and to guard the true sense of the Scriptures against the fictitious interpretations of the human mind." (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*. Jenae, 1671. II, 317 sq.) J. Adam Scherzer, a Leipzig theologian, writes thus: "The schoolmen say that the articles of faith grew with respect to conscious apprehension (*quoad cognitionem explicitam*); this is the secret and arcanum for the progress of scholastic theology." (*System. Theol.* Lips., 1704, p. 8.) This applies likewise to modern theology in the Lutheran Church. The assumption that dogmas are formed only gradually is its moving principle. As long as this assumption is granted, it is impossible to stop the bringing in of innovations and the process of dissolution, and the return to the one old, immutable, everlasting truth of the Church universal is effectually blocked.

A.

(To be continued)



The Institutional Missionary and the Spiritual Rehabilitation of the Prisoner

It is one of the ordinary incidents of our daily life to pick up the morning or evening paper and read in glaring head-lines of the commission of some atrocious crime. The offender, in most cases a young man, is a desperate character, and the authorities are glad to have him safely in hand. For several weeks we follow with eager interest the detailed accounts of the crime and of the trial, and when at last the offender is sentenced to five, ten, twenty years, or even to life imprisonment, we sink back in our chairs with a sigh of relief, even of satisfaction, and exclaim: "Good! He deserves it!" A few days later, when we have already forgotten his existence, a shackled young man stands before the gray, grim walls of the large prison-house; the great steel gates swing open slowly and lock with a jarring clang behind him, and another member is added to the Gray Brotherhood. The man is now a convict. He is rushed through the "dressing in" procedure, for a brief time put in quarantine, and then assigned to work.

Yet this dejected and rejected man is not forgotten by the Church. Whatever we may think of prisoners and their crimes, the fact nevertheless remains that each and every one has an immortal soul, for which the Savior also bled and died on Calvary's cross. It is God's will that the wicked should turn from his ways and live. Cognizant of the fact that the Lord enjoins the Church to preach the Gospel to every creature, a missionary chaplain is sent to the abode of convicted men. It is the Gospel that will save them from eternal condemnation. We have abundant evidence that the Word of God sown into the hearts of these imprisoned men does not return unto Him void. To stand before a large gathering of prisoners, oftentimes hundreds in numbers, and to preach to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a privilege any Christian minister might well covet. The Law of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, sin and grace, must ever be kept in the foreground. There should be no room in a prison service for the spectacular, sentimental, and highly emotional sermon. A prison congregation is different from an ordinary congregation. Its members are of various colors and races, learned and illiterate men, some religiously trained, others, again, without the benefit of thorough religious instruction and proper indoctrination. It is not an easy task, therefore, to preach to such a congregation and be understood. If the chief Christian fundamentals, sin and grace, the glorious work of redemption, are preached and taught in plain, simple language, illustrations used and human interest stories told, preferably the personal experiences of the chaplain, with proper

applications, the preacher will not fail to hold the attention of the congregation. The best preachers are those who choose simple words for their sermons and who remember that most people came to church to hear the great truths of Christianity rather than appeals to the intellect. Jesus Himself spoke plainly in His sermons to the people while on earth. He told parables in order to bring out great spiritual truths. Sickly sentimentality is the worst possible thing to offer men already too eager to justify their evil deeds. The chaplain needs to be a man of large heart, aided by an abundance of sound common sense. He needs to bear in mind constantly, in the difficult and delicate work he is called upon to perform, that the prison discipline must be upheld and enforced. He must never lose sight of the majesty of the law and of the prison rules and regulations, if he would be a power for good and hold the respect and confidence of the warden, so essential in successful prison work! The chaplain and the warden should work hand in hand, the one sustaining the other. They need to have a perfect understanding, neither mistrusting the other. The chaplain should be a man of great sincerity with an intense passion for the souls of men.

No matter how long one has been in actual prison work, a prison never fails to impress. The perfect attention, strange environments, the large number of youthful offenders, the hardened features of habitual criminals, the sadness of it all, make a profound impression, especially on the minds of those who for the first time attend a prison service. It is the personal contact and the individual work with the inmate that counts in a prison. The chaplain's work should be thought out beforehand, be methodical, premeditated, intentional, systematic, and thorough. Hand-picked fruit always lasts the longest.

Some people hold that religion cannot possibly be a deterrent from crime because members of virtually every religious affiliation are represented in all penitentiaries. They have come to the conclusion that religion is no help at all in keeping men out of prison.

A certain judge, before ascending the bench, was a public defender for many years. Thousands of men and women, charged with every conceivable crime, came before him. And he found that only 2 per cent. of them were active members of any church at the time of their arrest. The other 98 per cent. either had no religion or had fallen away from their religion, whatever it was. The average time that had elapsed since they were communicants of any church was five years. The real truth of the matter is this: Men and women who are *active* church-members are not the criminals. The criminals are persons who have rejected the com-

mandments of God. It was not their religion that brought them into serious trouble, but the abandonment of religion. It is not Christianity that has failed. Rather its opponents and the flagrant offenders against the Word of God have failed.

How do prison authorities regard religious work in penal institutions? The First National Prison Congress, conducted in the year 1870, has gone on record that "of all the reformatory agencies, religion is the first in importance, because most potent in its action upon the human heart and life." This principle was reaffirmed as late as 1930. Sanford Bates, well known as the former Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, has written a book entitled *Prisons and Beyond*. "There is no trace of the fanatical zeal of the reformer or of the hysteria of the well-meaning but unintelligent humanitarian to be found in this book. Mr. Bates' attitude towards religion and the part religion ought to play in the task of reforming the criminal is of special interest to church-workers. He believes that in the end only the religious appeal can be relied upon to effect a thorough reformation in the heart and life of a prisoner. Thus he assigns to the prison chaplain a position of great importance in the modern prison, stressing the point at the same time that an effective prison ministry calls for men especially trained for this service."

A consecrated chaplain does not seek the applause of the world, which is rarely given, nor material gain, but he glories in the fact that he is a humble servant of the Lord, assigned to labor among a people forgotten and forsaken, for which the Savior sacrificed his life in order to save them, and his reward is that he is permitted to serve.

The gravest offense committed by man against society is, no doubt, a flagrant transgression of the Fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." The taking of a life shortens and terminates for the victim his time of grace. This crime is called the capital crime and is punished either by life imprisonment or the execution of the criminal. The subject of death penalties for first-degree murder is one that has been much debated by prominent groups and individuals, among them being Warden Lewis E. Lawes of Sing Sing, the wardens of some of our other penitentiaries, Clarence Darrow, and the American League to Abolish Capital Punishment. These hold that the death penalty does not stop crime and that the condemned usually are too poor to afford good legal counsel. They point to the fact that the educated and well-to-do generally are able to escape the extreme punishment.

In the background of this long-standing debate are these facts. Eight States have definitely abandoned the death penalty—Michigan, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South

Dakota, Maine and Kansas. The remaining forty States have retained the death penalty, but only six of these make it mandatory. These are Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Vermont. In the other States either the judge or the jury is allowed to decide between death and life imprisonment. In nine States of the Union the death penalty is carried out by hanging. In twenty-two States and the District of Columbia, the electric chair is used. In nine States of the Union execution by lethal gas instead of electrocution or hanging has been adopted. Missouri is the latest State to turn to this form of inflicting the death penalty. The other States are North Carolina, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, and California. In Utah the condemned man may choose a firing squad or the noose. Delaware, with its two jails and one workhouse, without a State prison or adult reformatory for either men or women, inflicts capital punishment. In all capital-punishment States the death penalty may be inflicted for first-degree murder. In seventeen of these, rape also may bring the death penalty. In addition, in several others, arson, treason, robbery, burglary, and kidnapping are listed as punishable by death. So much as to punishment of first-degree murder in the various States of the Union.

What can and should be done for the spiritual rehabilitation of the prisoner? We all agree that there cannot be spiritual rehabilitation of the prisoner unless there is sincere repentance. Jesus said to the man healed at the pool of Bethesda: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," and to the penitent woman taken in adultery: "Go, and sin no more." There is but one power to reform the prisoner: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The infidel sailor, while safely in the home port, may decry and mock Christianity; but drifting on a broken spar toward a cannibal island, he will earnestly hope that some Christian missionary may have preceded him there and proclaimed the Gospel to those man-eating savages. It is God's will that the wicked should turn from his ways and live. The Law of God must be preached to these men, to bring them to a knowledge of their transgressions and sins. The Gospel is proclaimed to them, to assure the penitent that "Jesus sinners doth receive." Experience tells us that the chapel service, enhanced by good music, is looked forward to by many of these men as the brightest and best hour during the week.

To the public service we must add the important work of the personal interview. In the personal interview the prison pastor has one of the grandest opportunities to deal with the conscience-stricken and sin-burdened soul. No request for an interview made by a prisoner seeking spiritual ministration should ever be denied by the pastor. It means the salvaging of a precious soul.

There comes a time in the life of many of these men when they simply must confide in some one in order not to be crushed under the burden of guilt and sin. This is the golden hour for the chaplain. If he is a well-trained, experienced pastor and knows how to deal with this particular class of men, he will prove a distinct blessing to his charge and be an instrument for good to any penal institution, helping the authorities of the prison in their discipline, so essential in the proper governance of a prison. In the personal interview with the inmate the initial approach is of the greatest importance. Much depends on the first interview. The prisoner should be put at ease during the interview; unnecessary questioning should be avoided; he must be made to feel that the pastor has a personal interest in his spiritual welfare. The interview should not be conducted in a stern official way. A kind word, a friendly attitude, will help the pastor in winning the confidence of the man who seeks spiritual advice. The prisoner should know that his requests for interviews are welcome, and he should be invited to repeat his requests. While preaching is the very center of all religious work in a prison, yet in the personal interview the pastor has the great advantage of dealing with the *individual* inmate. The results are far-reaching. The personal interview in numerous cases leads to the baptism and confirmation of the person. It changes the entire attitude of the man, corrects his misbeliefs and errors, and, with God's help, accomplishes his reformation.

Let us quote here the Hon. John C. Maher, chairman of the Parole Commission of New York, speaking of the influence of religion in the life of a criminal: "To me it stands preeminently above all the police forces and all the armies that the world has ever conceived. It has an influence on an individual that cannot be injected by a parole board, that cannot be injected by a prison, but can be injected by those who are experts in the art of reaching the inner man." This suggestion that the aid of religion be definitely enlisted to help solve the problem of crime was applauded by the assembly. To reach the inner man of a prisoner means to convict the sinner of his sin and then hold before his eyes the crucified Christ.

Not all inmates of a penitentiary are serving a life sentence. There comes a time when they leave the prison, either by the expiration of their sentence or by way of a parole, or even a full pardon. What then? Am I still my brother's keeper? Has the clergy and the Christian laity any obligations toward him as to his spiritual rehabilitation? Am I willing to be a friend to an ex-prisoner? It is a most critical time for a prisoner when he leaves the prison. It is the time when he must adjust himself

to a normal life. What he then needs is steady employment and work. "Idleness is the mother of vice" and, as a certain warden has said, "also the father." It may be his misfortune to meet on the outside with men who have served with him in the same prison. If he associates with them on intimate terms, he will be in constant danger of being tempted and misled, especially so if he is unemployed, without friends, and without money. This is the time when he needs a friend who will encourage and strengthen him to "go straight," to avoid evil associations, and to seek the companionship of God-fearing men. Let us hear what Victoria A. Larmons of the New York State Division of Parole has to say. "I think," says she, "that the experience we have in our day indicates that, while it is highly desirable that something be done on a religious basis, practical experience shows that not much can be done unless the religious groups actually will become interested in doing something for the criminal. Judging from my personal experience of five years in New York City, in which we have dealt with now some ten or twelve thousand cases, I believe that, generally speaking, the individual clergymen and the laity of all the different groups are definitely disinterested in the criminal." The person just quoted is not offering unjust criticism. It is true, not many are interested in the man who "has done time." It is not easy to interest the average pastor or congregation in a man who has vacated a prison-cell.

The charge was made against Jesus that He put up with criminals and sinners, that He even sat down to eat with them. He offered pardon to them. Jesus said He came "not to condemn but to save." In His dying moments on the cross He offered pardon and salvation to a dying criminal. Thus we must be eager bearers of forgiving love to hopeless sinners. Jesus knew no inferior among those with whom He came in contact, as He could not possibly know any equal. Jesus pitied the unfortunate. To men about to stone the sinful woman already referred to He said: "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her." And to the unhappy woman, after her guilty accusers had all gone, He said: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Jesus taught justice, kindness, mercy. God's Word teaches us that every man who is in bodily or spiritual need is our neighbor, whether he is just or unjust, honest or dishonest. Nor must we think that the sympathy for these outcasts will degrade us. What though the law has penalized these men and women by depriving them of their liberty for a certain period! Are we a whit better than they? Indeed not. It is only the unmerited grace of God that has kept us from falling. We need the same Savior, the same pardon, the same cleansing, the

same robe of righteousness, as these people to make us worthy of the Kingdom of Glory.

The average church-member is quick to condemn crime and criminals, especially after reading a front-page murder story; he deplores the growing flood of criminality within our borders, speaks about it as he reads about it, but "nobody does anything about it." It is true that trying to bring the offender back to the right way of thinking, to lead him in the right paths, to return him to the Church and Christian environment, to make him God-fearing and a law-abiding citizen, is a most difficult, trying, and often most disappointing effort. Yet it also is true, many have won over the power of sin, and many will win. Many have failed, and will fail, but most of them have tried. All of which recalls the small boy overheard thus in his prayer: "O Lord, make me a good boy; but if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Fortunately for humankind, the divine patience surpasses ours. The dying Christ said to a convicted, yet penitent prisoner: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Gospel is the only means for the salvation of these souls also. Let us therefore faithfully attend to our God-given duties and at all times bear in mind that, "where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound," that, "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord," Rom. 5: 20, 21.

E. A. DUEMLING

Anfechtung und Trost im Spätmittelalter

„Anfechtung und Trost im Spätmittelalter und bei Luther“, das ist der Titel einer kürzlich von Lizentiat Helmut Appel als eine der Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte veröffentlichten Broschüre, die wir allen Lesern unserer Zeitschrift aufs wärmste empfehlen möchten.*) In der Hoffnung, daß mancher dadurch bewogen werden möchte, sich das Büchlein anzuschaffen, geben wir hiermit einen kurzen Überblick über seinen reichen Inhalt.

In der Einleitung schreibt der Verfasser: „Das Wissen um die Anfechtung als Stück christlicher Lebenserfahrung, das Suchen nach ihrem Sinn und Wert, der Kampf um ihre Überwindung begleitet die Christenheit durch alle Jahrhunderte. In den Vordergrund aber rückt dieses Erleben der Anfechtung immer dann, wenn zu der alltäglichen Not des einzelnen die große Not einer verfolgten Kirche, eines zer-

*) Anfechtung und Trost im Spätmittelalter und bei Luther. Von Lic. Helmut Appel. 140 Seiten Text. 12 Seiten Illustrationen. 6x9, broschiert. Verlag: R. Heinflus Nachfolger, Leipzig. Preis: RM. 4.50.

brechenden Zeitalters, eines zerrissenen Volkes, einer durch Seuchen und Hunger heimge suchten Landschaft kommt.

„So ist es nicht zufällig, daß die Zahl der Schriften, die sich als Trostschriften im Mittelalter mit der Frage der Anfechtung und ihrer Überwindung befassen, seit der Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts stark an= schwillt und erst abebbt, als die große Unruhe und Weltangst und die schleichende Verzweiflung der folgenden eineinhalb Jahrhunderte plötzlich endet mit der gewaltigen, zugleich erschütternden und befreienden Geistes= schlächt, die Luther schlug als einer, der tiefer als wohl je ein Mensch in über tausend Jahren abendländischer Kirchengeschichte — Gottschalk vielleicht ausgenommen — durch die Anfechtung des Gotteszorns und der Gnadenwahl geschritten war und immer wieder hindurch mußte.“ (S. 3.)

Es ist ein erschütterndes Bild, das der Verfasser in seinem Gang durch die Quellen vor unsern Augen entrollt. Immer deutlicher und überschredender tritt uns die Theologie des Zweifels, die im Papsttum herrscht, entgegen, und immer klarer wird uns, daß der Papst in Wahr= heit der Antichrist ist, der unter dem Schein des Christentums die Chris= ten um die ihnen von Christo so teuer erkaufte Heilsgewißheit und fröhliche Zuversicht in guten und bösen Tagen, im Leben und Sterben beraubt.

Lic. Appel führt zunächst eine Trostpredigt von Nikolaus von Straßburg (einem Zeitgenossen Meister Eckharts in der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts) an, aus der wir folgendes zitieren: „Man liest in dem heutigen Evangelium, daß unser Herr seine lieben Freunde oft in Anfechtung und Versuchungen des Teufels fallen läßt, damit sie ihre Krankheit (Mangel, Sünde) desto besser erkennen und demütig werden und Lohn verdienen. Wenn er aber sieht, daß sie in der Versuchung fallen wollen und ohne seine Hilfe nicht stehen mögen, so leiht er seine Hand dazu und kommt ihnen zu Hilfe. . . . Unser Herr ließ St. Petrus wohl sinken auf dem Meer, er ließ ihn aber nicht ertrinken. . . . Nun kommen sie etwa und sprechen: O weh, Herr, mir fallen so böse Ge= danken ein, mir ist so weh damit! Ich spreche: Sie seien so böse sie wollen, allieweil es dir leid ist und du nicht mit deinem freien Willen mit Lust dabei beharrst, so schadet es dir nicht. . . . Ja, Herr, es ist mir leid, von ganzem Herzen leid. So laß sie fahren oder kommen und geben sie ihrer nicht. . . . Es ist genug, daß du dich ihrer wehrest und dir leid sind. Wollen sie dann nicht hören, so laß fahren, bis du ihrer ledig wirst. Daß wir aller Schuld also ledig werden, das helfe uns Gott. Amen.“ Von dem Sünderheiland kein Wort!

Meister Eckhart ist der nächste, der zu Worte kommt, zunächst in seinem Traktat *Benedictus Deus*, „einem seiner schlichtesten und reinsten deutschen Werke“. Die Schrift ist einer Frau, der Königin Agnes von Ungarn, gewidmet, geht also über den Kreis bloß klösterlicher Not und Tröstungen hinaus. „Allerdings wird hier nur der mystisch angeregte

Mensch angesprochen, nicht die Masse des „Kirchenvolkes“, nicht der gewöhnliche Kirchenschrist.“ (S. 10.)

Die Trostlehre Eckharts faßt Appel, wie folgt, zusammen: „Neben Ratschlägen psychologischer Art stehen bei Eckhart zwei Grundgedanken des Trostes: 1. Einssein mit Gott bedeutet Unempfindlichkeit gegen alles Leiden; wer von Gott erfüllt ist, dem kann alles Geschaffene nichts mehr anhaben. 2. Recht ertragenes Leiden wandelt sich aus Last in Segen, es birgt eine Fülle von Berten für den, der es als Gabe des guten Gottes erkennt und trägt; es bringt Bewährung, Wohlwollen Gottes, Nähe Gottes und Christi; es reinigt unsern Gehorsam, unsere Gottesliebe; es trägt in sich die Verheißung ewiger Freude, macht uns der ewigen Seligkeit wert, ist das sicherste Zeichen des guten Menschen, des Gottesfreundes.“

„Aber über all diesem Reichtum der Leidenswertung darf nicht übersehen werden, daß hier die Not der Anfechtung durch die Sünde, das heißt, die konkrete Schuld und die gottwidrige Haltung des Menschen, nur eben gestreift wird. (Die einzige Erwähnung der Sünde geschieht hypothetisch und nebenbei! Die falsche Hinnéigung des Menschen zur Kreatur wird mehr als Not denn als Schuld gesehen.) Und es bleibt die andere Frage, ob das ‚einig ein‘, das leuchtende Ziel der Leidlosen Gotteinung, mögliche Wirklichkeit ist für einen Menschen — oder nur Spekulation. Und es bleibt endlich die Frage, ob es den ‚guten‘ Menschen, dem allein, auch im Stande der Unvollkommenheit, das Leiden zum Segen wird, wirklich gibt.“ (S. 13. 14.)

Auch der Kreis, an den sich der nächste Trostschriftsteller, Heinrich Seuse oder Sufo, 1295—1366, wendet, ist verhältnismäßig klein. „Er umfaßt nur die ernstesten ‚Gottesfreunde‘; ja auch die Nöte, von denen die Rede ist, sind ausgesprochen die Nöte des ernstesten Jüngers Christi.“ (S. 14.) Im Gegensatz zu Eckhart erkennt er den Zorn Gottes und das Verdienst Christi an. Die Betrachtung dieses Leidens nimmt bei Seuse eine wichtige Stellung ein. Ist sie doch „so wertvoll, so verdienstlich, daß sie auch ohne andächtige Herzensstimmung als Tugend zu rechnen ist und zur Minderung der Sündenstrafe hilft“. Die Aneignung der Verdienste Christi „geschieht nach bestimmter Regel: 1. Denke an die Größe und Menge deiner Sünden; 2. vernichte die eigenen Besserungswerke; 3. wage es auf die ‚besserunge‘, die Genugtuung Christi: ein Tröpflein seines Blutes wiegt die Sünde von tausend Belten auf — und jeder Mensch macht davon so viel für sich wirksam, wie er mitleidet und darin dem Herrn sich angleicht. . . . Da ist der Schatz der Leiden Christi für uns bereit — von uns haben wir keine nennenswerten Verdienste —, und wir können ihn unmittelbar für uns wirksam machen (abseits vom Ablassinstitut der Kirche); aber wieviel von diesem Schatz für uns wirksam wird, das hängt ab von der Andacht und Tiefe unsers Mitleidens.“ (S. 16. 17.)

Da keine Trostschriften von Johannes Tauler überliefert sind, zeigt

der Verfasser aus zwei Predigten, was Tauler über Anfechtung lehrt. Luther rühmt ja des öfteren Taulers Predigten; doch macht Appel darauf aufmerksam, daß Luther Tauler erst kennenlernte, „als sein reformatorischer Durchbruch schon vollzogen war“. (S. 106.) „Luther liest dabei aus Tauler eben das heraus, was er vorher an Erkenntnis durch Augustin und vor allem Paulus direkt gewann.“ (S. 107.)

Nach einer zusammenfassenden Darstellung der Trostlehre der deutschen Mystik geht der Verfasser auf die Trostbücher der späteren Scholastik über. Er zeigt aus Johann von Dambachs *Riesenwerk Consolatio Theologiae* mit seinen 286 Blättern Folio, lateinisch geschrieben, aus Johannes Gersons *Consolatio Theologiae* und zwei kleineren Schriften, aus Johannes Niders *Consolatorium Timoratae Conscientiae*, Trostschrift für ein erschrockenes Gewissen, die Trostlehre der Spätscholastik, die er dann S. 51 bis 57 in einem Überblick trefflich zusammenfaßt. Zunächst zeigt er, wie die Spätscholastik das Wesen der Anfechtung aufgefaßt hat als „Bedrohung des menschlichen Lebens überhaupt, sei es durch Unglück und Leid, sei es durch die Lockung der Sünde, sei es schließlich durch die Angst des Gewissens und seine Zweifel“. (S. 51.) über den Wert der Anfechtung lesen wir: „Einmal bewirkt die Anfechtung — komme sie nun als Unglück und Leid, als Sündenlockung oder als Zweifel und Gerichtsangst — Tugendwachstum und innere Läuterung. . . . Neben diesen Früchten des Leidens und Kämpfens, dem Wachstum der Tugenden, vor allem der Demut, die bei Gott wohlgefällig macht, steht die Verdienstlichkeit und der Ruhm des Duldens und Streitens selbst; nicht nur Leidensfrucht und Kampfesfieg bringt Heil, auch der Schmerz und die Not der Anfechtung selbst bringt Lohn und Gnade von Gott. . . . Noch höher ist der Preis! Er erschöpft sich nicht in Gottes Lob und zukünftigem Lohn: Christus, ja Gott selbst steht bei uns, leidet mit uns; und andererseits werden wir durch unser Leiden und Kämpfen Christo gleichförmig (*conformitas Christi*), ihm ähnlich.“ (S. 54.) Ja, Anfechtung ist ein Zeichen göttlichen Wohlgefallens, ein Zeichen der Erwählung zum Heil, ein Unterpfand der himmlischen Herrlichkeit. (S. 55.)

Doch sind auch diese Wirkungen der Anfechtungen durch das Tun des Menschen bedingt. Zwar stellt Gott und die Kirche keine unerfüllbaren Forderungen; zwar übersteigt Gottes Güte bei weitem seine Gerechtigkeit; zwar tritt dazu das Beispiel, das Verdienst, der Beistand Christi, auch Beispiel, Beistand und Fürbitte der Gottesmutter und aller Engel, Heiligen und Bekenner. Dennoch haben alle diese Angebote und Gaben göttlicher Hilfe ihre Voraussetzung im rechten Verhalten des Menschen. „Er hat, nachdem ihm rechte Erkenntnis seiner Lage geworden ist — die Trostbücher wollen ja dazu verhelfen —, sich im Kampf zu bewähren, hat zu tun, soviel er kann. . . . Erst entschlossene Abwehr von der Sünde ermöglicht den Einsatz göttlicher Hilfe aus ihr; erst entschlossenes Tragen des Leidens führt zum Mittragen Gottes; nur die Vermeidung der völligen Verzweiflung führt am Unheil vorbei, das

aus dem vom Teufel gewirkten Skrupel erwachsen kann. Aber dem Strebenden läßt es Gott gelingen. Und wie Gottes Gesetz erfüllbar ist für den normalen, vernünftigen Menschen, wenn er nur will, so ist auch der Kampf mit dem Teufel siegreich zu beenden. Er kann ja niemand zwingen (*cogere non potest*); wenn wir uns beharrlich weigern, kann uns der böse Feind keinen entscheidenden Schaden tun. Und wehren wir uns nur mit Entschlossenheit, so ist Gottes Weistand nicht fern! So ist Kampf und Sieg möglich, ja leicht. Endlich ist auch der Kampf mit der Welt nicht unerträglich schwer; denn, bei Licht besehen, sind die Güter, um die es da geht, Scheingüter und das irdische Glück nur Scheinglück, trügerisch, vergänglich: so ist solcher Verlust kein schwerer Schaden! (S. 55. 56.) Welch jämmerlicher Trost! Welch elender Sandgrund! Wie wird da alle und jede Gewißheit des Heils systematisch untergraben und die Theologie des Zweifels unter dem Vorwand des Trostes in Herz und Gewissen gepflanzt! Das wird nur um so deutlicher, wenn wir schließlich noch auf die Taktik des Anfechtungskampfes achten, die gerade in den Trostschriften der Spätscholastik eingehend behandelt wird. Drei Punkte hebt der Verfasser hervor: einmal die Flucht unter die Autorität der kirchlichen Lehre und Ordnung, auch gegen die eigene Gewissensüberzeugung; sodann den dreifachen Weg des *Ausweichens* vor der Gefahr der Anfechtung (Weltflucht, Meidung verantwortungsvoller Ämter), des *Nichttrauens* gegen alles Außerordentliche im geistlichen Leben, des entschlossenen Kampfes (Askese); endlich drittens, daß man gegen jede Versuchung durch Überbetonung einer Seite des Lebens oder Glaubensstandes die andere Seite recht ins Licht rückt, z. B. gegen Verzweiflung die Hoffnung. (S. 56. 57.)

Nachdem Appel dann noch kurz den Trost der *Imitatio Christi* dargestellt hat, geht er zum nächsten Kapitel über, „Todesanfechtung und Sterbetrost“. Da lesen wir zu Anfang: „Das Spätmittelalter ist nicht nur die Zeit, in der sich durch Nöte aller Art die Sehnsucht nach Trost der Menschen und Völker besonders stark bemächtigt; es ist auch die Zeit, in der die letzte Not, der Tod, geradezu alle Lebensäußerungen beherrscht, sei es, daß man sein ganzes Leben auf ein gutes Sterben richtet, sei es, daß man in der Flucht vor dem Sterben das Leben desto stärker und wilder genießen will.“

„Nichts ist gewisser als der Tod, nichts ist ungewisser als die Todesstunde! Diese Wahrheit gibt der ganzen Zeit ihr Gepräge. Sie wirkt sich aus in der bildenden Kunst, in der Darstellungen von Toten und des Todes selber sich mehren, am eindrucklichsten wohl in den Totentänzen, die in Kirchen, an Weinhäusern und Friedhofsmauern und anderswo entstehen. Sie wirkt sich aus in den Spielen vom Tod, oft auch als Todestänze gestaltet, die, wie die bildlichen Darstellungen, möglichst kraß, bewußt aufrüttelnd, gewollt grausam die Wirklichkeit des Todes, besonders des unseligen Todes, dem die ewige Höllequal folgt, vor Augen führen. Und diese Wahrheit vom Tod und die damit ver-

bundene Mahnung ‚Memento mori!‘ spricht uns an in den mahnenden Liedern („Media in vita . . .“), den Mahnworten und -sprüchen („Mors peccatorum pessima“ u. a.) und in den Traktaten und Büchlein, die sich mahnend, warnend, belehrend und tröstend mit Tod und Todesnot befassen, sei es in Form eines Gesprächs des Menschen mit seiner Seele, mit dem Tod selbst (wie im ‚Adermann‘), sei es in Form seelsorgerlichen Zuspruchs und Unterrichts über den rechten Kampf mit dem Tod und den mit ihm verbundenen Ansechtungen.

„Mit diesen Traktaten und Büchlein haben wir es im folgenden zu tun. Dabei sind auch einzubeziehen die Kapitel über das Sterben, die sich in den bereits erwähnten Trostbüchern finden; einen breiteren Raum aber werden einnehmen die selbständigen Sterbebüchlein, die meist unter dem Namen ‚Ars moriendi‘, Sterbekunst, ihren Weg in noch weitere Volkskreise gemacht haben, als das bei den meist umfänglicheren Trostbüchern und -schriften gemeinhin der Fall war.“ (S. 63.)

„Die selbständigen Sterbebüchlein, denen wir uns nun zuwenden, gehen sachlich und der Form nach im wesentlichen auf drei Grundformen zurück. Es sind dies: 1. die sogenannten ‚Anselmischen Fragen‘, 2. die Sterbekunst („Ars moriendi“) Gersons (in dessen *Opusculum Tripartitum*), 3. die Sterbekunst der fünf Ansechtungen („Editio princeps“, 3. B. in London).“ (S. 67.)

Wir geben die Anselmischen Fragen in doppelter Form in der altertümlichen Schreibweise wieder:

„Nach dem ‚Schatzbehalter‘, Nürnberg, 1491, bei A. Koberger:

„Freust du dich, das du in dem hail. christen glauben stirbst? — Er sol antworten: Ja, ich freue mich sein. 1)

„Vergichst oder bekenntst du, das du nit gelebt hast als du solltest gelebt haben? Ja, ich bekenn es. 2)

„Reut es dich? Ja. 3)

„Hastu willen dich zu bessern, ob du lenger leben solltest? Ja. 4)

„Glaubst du auch, dass unser her ihesus christus, des lebendigen gotes sun, für dich gestorben ist? Ich glaub es. 5)

„Dankst du im? Ich dank im. 6)

„Glaubst du das du sunst nit magst behalten werden den durch seinen Tod? Ich glaubs.“ (Falt, S. 39 f.) 7)

„Aus dem *Hortulus Animae*, Straßburg, 1509, bei Johann Knoblauch, 230 Bl., die Sterbekunst ab „L. VII“:

„Etliche frag so man eym sterbenden vnd hienzyehenden menschen thun sol.

„In dise weysz vnd der gleychen sol ein dotsiecher mensch gefraget werden. Vnd darauff sol er auch antwurten gern vnd dapferlichen so best er mag: vnd Ja sprechen.

„Zum ersten werde er gefraget, ob er sich froeuwe: das er in rechtem glauben verscheiden werd. 1)

„Zum andern mal: Ob er warlichen bekenn: dz er nit also cristelichen vnd erberlichen nach dem willen gotts gelebt hab: als er alle zeyt billichen gethon solt haben. 2)

„Zum dritten ob ym alle seyn sünd grosz vnd kleyn, wie sie got erkenne, ausz grund seynes hertzen leyd seynt. 3)

„Zum vierden: wer es das der almechtig got ym seyn leben fristen vnd erlengeren würd: ob er alsdann sich gentslichen vnd on hyndernisz besseren woelte. 4)

„Zum fünften, ob er festiglich glaub: das vnser lieber Herr Cristus Jhesus warer gott vnd mensch vmb seynen willen yn von dem ewigen tod zu erlösen, gecreutziget vnnnd gestorben sey. 5)

„Zum sechszten. Ob er doch got: des vnd and' vnzalichen vill guttäten danckbar sey. 6)

„Zum sybenden, ob er vn vngezweyfelt glaube, das er nitt ewiglichen behalten vnd selig werden mög: dann durch das bitter leyden vnd sterben Jhesu Christi. 7)

„Er sol auch gefragt werden ob er vnrechtürtig gut vill oder wenig besitz. . . ' (Hafaf, S. 368 f.)“ (S. 68. 69.)

Diesen Fragen folgt die „Große Ermahnung“: „(Anschließend an Antwort 7:)

„Ey so setz alle dein zuversicht (die weil dein sel in dir ist) allain in disen tod und in kain ander ding habst du hoffnung. In disen tod send dich gantz und gar, mit disem tod bedeck dich gantz. In disen tod wickel dich, und ob dich got der herr richten oder urtailen will, so sprich: herr, den tod unsres heren iesu christi deines suns würff ich zwischen mich und dein urtail, sunst sprech ich nit mit dir. Spricht er, du habst verdient, das du verdampt solt werden, so sprich: Herr, den tod unsers herrn iesu cristi würff ich zwischen mich und mein verwürckung, und sein verdienst für das verdienen das ich solt haben und hab es nit. Sprich aber (nochmals), herr, den tod unseres herren ih. cr. setz ich zwischen mich und deinen zorn; darnach sprich zum dritten mal: herr in dein hendt emphil ich meinen gaist.“ (S. 69. 70.)

„Die Große Ermahnung ist eins der größten und tiefften Stüde in den Sterbebüchern. Die Betonung der Rettung allein bei Christus ohne alles eigene Verdienst ist wohl nirgends im Sterbebuch, ja im gesamten Trostschrifttum klarer, stärker, schlichter als an unserer Stelle.“ (S. 71.)

Gersons Trostlehre faßt er, wie folgt, zusammen: „Er tröstet mit dem Hinweis auf die göttliche Vorsehung, die sühnende Kraft des Todesleidens, die Barmherzigkeit Gottes und Christi und aller Engel und Heiligen, vor allem der ‚Gottesmutter‘; er mahnt zu Geduld, Ausrichtung der Seele auf Gott allein, Bereitschaft zur Buße in Reue, Reichte und Genugtuung, zu Gebet und Sakrament. Wichtig ist ihm

endlich die Hilfe eines treuen Freundes, der alles wegscheucht, was die rechte Vorbereitung stören kann, alles heranzieht, was sie fördert.“ (S. 75.)

Es folgt nun eine überaus interessante und lehrreiche Beschreibung der „*Ars moriendi* der fünf Anfechtungen“. Die elf Holzschnitte der ersten Ausgabe, ca. 1450—1460 anzusehen, sind unserm Buche angeheftet und sind allein den Preis des Buches wert. Seite 75—104 werden dann verschiedene andere Ausgaben der „*Sterbekunst*“ besprochen und der Trost dieser Bücher zusammengefaßt.

Im zweiten Teil seiner Schrift behandelt Appel den Einfluß der Anfechtungslehre der spätmittelalterlichen Trost- und Sterbebücher auf Luthers Anfechtungserfahrung und Anfechtungstrost. Wir lesen von Staupitz: „Dieser fromme, tiefe Theologe und Seelsorger . . . war und blieb der katholische Mensch, der Luther im Letzten nicht begriff, noch weniger ihn zur reformatorischen Entdeckung hinführen konnte.“ (S. 108.) „Nach dem oben festgestellten Tatbestand verleugnet die ‚*Ars moriendi*‘ praktisch für die Sterbestunde die Lehre vom *meritum* und stützt sich allein auf Gottes Gnade. Das bedeutet kein Aufgeben dieser Lehre für das sonstige Leben, keine entschiedene Abkehr vom ‚*facere quod in se est*‘, von der Teilung des Anteils am Heilswert zwischen Gott und Mensch (vgl. Scheel, II, 268, zur ‚*Admonitio*‘); aber es wird doch in jenem letzten, entscheidenden Augenblick nicht darauf geblickt, sondern allein auf Christi Genugtuung und Verdienst, auf den Christus für uns. Luther selbst hat das gesehen und nicht gezweifelt, daß hier unter dem Papsttum rechtes christliches Sterben gemeint sei, wo man am eigenen heiligen Leben und den guten Werken verzweifelte und auf den vorgehaltenen Christus blickte. Allerdings, dieses Loslassen der Verdienstlehre für den Augenblick des Sterbens gab keine Möglichkeit zur Reform der Lehre selbst; es liegt hier vielmehr in der ‚*Ars moriendi*‘ etwas vor, was man als ein Herauspringen aus den Gleisen kennzeichnen kann, nicht aber ein Fahren auf neuen Gleisen. Daraus erhellt, daß auch hier nicht Schülerschaft, sondern Begleitung für Luther zu finden ist, soweit es sich um Letztes handelt, während an den übrigen Punkten Luther wirklich bei der ‚*Ars moriendi*‘ in die Schule gegangen ist, mag er nun einzelne Schriften unserer Gruppe genannt haben oder ihrem Gedanken- und Bildgut anderswie begegnet sein.“ (S. 113. 114.)

Auf Seite 117 hätte nach den beigegebenen Zitaten 5. 6. die von Luther schon in seinem Sermon von der Betrachtung des heiligen Leidens Christi so klar ausgedrückte Lehre von der stellvertretenden Genugtuung klarer und schärfer zum Ausdruck gebracht werden sollen, als es im Text geschieht. Trefflich ist des Verfassers Ausführung auf Seite 120: „Die Grundstimmung der *Tessaradekas*: Dankbarkeit, Freude und Siegesgewißheit, steht in scharfem Gegensatz zum Klagen und der müden Stimmung der alten Trostbücher, trotz aller Jenseitsverklärung. Aber

auch methodisch stellt Luther das Alte gradezu auf den Kopf, wenn er hier und sonst an Stelle vieler Autoritäten die Heilige Schrift fast allein zur Geltung bringt, und wenn bei ihm — gerade in der *Tessaradekas* — an Stelle der Fülle der Trostgründe (Verdienstlichkeit des Kämpfens und Leidens, Ruhm des Sieges, Fürbitte der himmlischen Heerscharen, besondere Heiligkeit der besonders schwer Angefochtenen usw.) ein einziger Trostgrund tritt: die Betrachtung der Güte Gottes, die unser ganzes Leben durchzieht und ihren Gipfel hat in Kreuz und Auferstehung Christi. — Dieser letztgenannte Unterschied zwischen den alten Trostbüchern und der *Tessaradekas* ist bei ihr allein so scharf; die beiden Sermonen, die wir hier noch betrachten, haben wenigstens Anklänge an das Alte und einzelne, für Luther unanstößige Stücke aus ihrem Trostinhalt (s. dort).“

Man schaffe sich das Büchlein an, und man wird das Papsttum als das 2. Theß. 2. geweissagte Geheimnis der Bosheit um so besser erkennen und von ganzem Herzen Gott danken, daß er uns durch das Evangelium Pauli und Luthers berufen hat zum herrlichen Eigentum unsers Herrn Jesu Christi. Möge er uns auch ferner in seinem ewigen Trost und der guten Hoffnung durch Gnade erhalten!

L. h. Lätisch

Predigtentwürfe für die Evangelien der Thomafius-Perikopenreihe

Vierter Sonntag nach Trinitatis

Matth. 5, 7—12

Was ist vor Gott ein gutes Werk? (Syn.-Kat., Frage 180.) Matth. 19, 27; 20, 12. 13. Die Schrift verbietet uns die Lohnsucht. Sie lehrt aber, daß die guten Werke der Christen nicht unbelohnt bleiben.

Der Lohn der guten Werke

1. Ein großer und gewisser Gnadenlohn
2. Den Gläubigen zu ihrem Trost verheißen

1

A. Der Lohn. 1. Er ist groß. Er besteht vornehmlich in geistlichen und himmlischen Gütern. a. Barmherzigkeit, die wir doch so nötig haben, da wir uns gegen Gott und Menschen versündigen. b. Das Schauen Gottes, hier in seinen Werken und Wegen und vornehmlich in der Schrift, dort von Angesicht zu Angesicht. c. Die Ehre der Anerkennung als Gottes Kinder von seiten Gottes und von seiten der Mitchristen. d. Besitz des Himmelreichs nebst dem besonderen Lohn der Herrlichkeit, die an uns soll offenbart werden. Kann man die Größe

und den Wert dieses Lohnes abſchätzen, zur Genüge ausmalen in ſeiner vollen Pracht und Würde?

2. Er iſt gewiß. Weil vornehmlich ein geiſtlicher Lohn und theilweiſe zukünftig, iſt er nicht immer offenbar, ſondern noch vielfach verborgen und leider manchmal Gegenſtand des Zweifels im Herzen des Chriſten, Pf. 73, 13. 14, ja von den Ungläubigen als fabelhaft verworfen. Aber der Lohn wird von Chriſto verheißen, aufbewahrt und zu ſeiner Zeit den Gläubigen ausbezahlt, Pf. 33, 4.

3. Jeſus preiſt alle, denen dieſer Lohn verheißen iſt, glücklich. Am jüngſten Tage wird es offenbar, daß er die, welche wahrhaft gute Werke getan haben, über Bitten und Verſtehen belohnen wird.

B. Gnadenlohn. Daß es ein Gnadenlohn iſt, erkennen wir 1. wiederum aus den Bezeichnungen des Lohnes ſelbſt, der ſchon in Chriſto und nur um Chriſti willen gegeben iſt. Der Begriff von Barmherzigkeit ſchließt ja ſchon alles Verdienſt aus, und ſo iſt auch das Gottſchauen, die Anerkennung des Kindesverhältniſſes, das Himmelsreich ganz von Chriſti Verdienſt abhängig und uns in ihm ſchon geſchenkt; 2. aus der Bezeichnung ſelig (*makarioi*, nicht *sesomenoi*), die Jeſus anwendet auf die, welche hier auf Erden in der täglichen Heiligung tätig ſind; 3. aus den Bezeichnungen derer, die den Lohn empfangen. Es ſind Bezeichnungen, die nur auf die paſſen, die im Gnadenſtand ſind, die zuvor aus Gnaden durch die Gnadenmittel das Gnadenwerk der Befehrung von Gott empfangen haben, ohne eigene Werke gerettet ſind, Eph. 2, 8—10. Darum bekennen wir auch z. B. in der Beichte, daß wir „durch Beiſtand des Heiligen Geiſtes unſer Leben“ beſſern wollen. Und Jeſus ſagt: Joh. 15, 5; 4. aus der Thatſache, daß wir Gott und den Menſchen alle guten Werke ſchuldig ſind ohne Lohn.

Die armen, tugendſtolzen Weltmenſchen und verblendeten Vögel! Selbſt beim ſchärſten Blick kann Gott kein eigentlich gutes Werk, das Jeſus im Texte nennt, an ihnen entdecken. Sie werden nicht einen von ihnen geſüchten Lohn, geſchweige den Gnadenlohn, ſondern für ihre Unterlaſſungs- und Begehungsſünden den gerechten Lohn der Strafe von Gott empfangen.

2

A. Den Gläubigen verheißen. Eben nur die Barmherzigen, die reinen Herzen, die Frieden machen, die um Chriſti willen Verfolgten, werden von Jeſu als Empfänger des Lohnes genannt. Alle dieſe Bezeichnungen paſſen nur auf die wahren Chriſten, auf die, welche am jüngſten Tage zur Rechten Chriſti ſtehen werden. Daſſelbe erkennt man an der Art des Lohnes; denn nur die Gläubigen kommen in den Himmel, werden als Gottes Kinder anerkannt uſw.

B. Zum Troſt. Wie viele guten Werke warten gleichſam darauf, daß wir ſie tun! Zu Hauſe die Eheleute gegenseitig, Eltern und Kinder gegenseitig; im Umgang mit den Mitbürgern und dem Staate gegen-

über; im Gnadenreich an den Mitchriften, an der Gemeinde, in unserer Verbindung mit Schwesterngemeinden zur Erhaltung und Ausbreitung der reinen Lehre und zum Wohl der Heiden, Gal. 6, 9. 10. Und kommt Verfolgung hinzu, Verlust der Güter, Trennung von Familie und Freund, scheint's dann schier zu viel erwartet? Mit seiner Seligsprechung und Verheißung des Gnadenlohns tröstet und ermuntert uns unser gnädiger Heiland. (S. Luther zu Röm. 8, 18, St. L. XII, 717 ff.)

Schluß: Lied 277, 10. 11.

G. H. Smukal

Fünfter Sonntag nach Trinitatis

Matth. 7, 24—29

Hier ist der Schluß der Bergpredigt. über den Eindruck berichtet M. 28 f. Warum ist diese Predigt so gewaltig, so erschütternd? Weil sie in bestimmten Worten ein laues, weltförmiges Christentum als dem Willen Gottes zuwider straft und dem Heuchler und Scheinchristen die Maske abreißt. Wie sehr wir gerade in unserer Zeit des rasend schnell überhandnehmenden Weltwesens und der Gleichgültigkeit in Fragen der Moral diese Predigt nötig haben, sollte jedem von uns klar sein.

Der Schluß der Bergpredigt schlägt denselben Ton an. Wir haben hier

Die Ermahnung, das Wort Gottes nicht bloß äußerlich, ohne Verhezigung seiner Lehren, zu hören

1. Das Hören, das die innerliche Annahme und das Befolgen der göttlichen Lehre in sich schließt, bringt wahres Heil
2. Das bloß äußerliche Hören hingegen endet mit des Menschen Verderben

1

Jesus legt seine Lehre in einem passenden Vergleich dar. Vor ihm standen viele Zuhörer. Alle Augen waren auf ihn gerichtet; alle hörten seine Worte. Es mag aber wohl der Fall gewesen sein, daß ein großer Unterschied zwischen ihnen bestand und daß viele zuhörten, ohne die Worte in sich aufzunehmen, sie als göttlich anzuerkennen, dafür dankbar zu sein und ihnen Gehorsam zu geloben. Dieser Unterschied besteht jetzt noch.

Wer mit innerlicher Annahme und aufrichtigem Gehorsam hört, ist gleich einem Menschen, der sein Haus auf einen Felsen baut. Wie passend ist das Bild: Fest steht ein solches Haus, wenn die Stürme draußen und die Wasserfluten daherrauschen!

Jesus Worte weisen darauf hin, wie wichtig das Wort Gottes für unser Seelenheil ist. Es ist in der Tat ein Gnadenmittel. Vgl. Röm. 1, 16. Soll aber das Wort uns helfen, so muß es recht gehört werden.

Wer es, wenn er es hört, gläubig annimmt, hat Vergebung seiner Sünden, die ihm in diesem Wort dargereicht wird. Er lernt ferner, wie er Gott recht dienen kann. Indem er das Wort immer wieder hört, wird der Glaube in ihm gestärkt, er wächst in seinem Christentum.

Die Stürme der Anfechtung werden kommen, Trübsale werden über ihn hereinbrechen, und schließlich klopft der Tod bei ihm an. Der rechte Hörer jedoch steht auf einem Felsen. Durch das Wort überwindet er. Ist unser Hören dieser Art?

2

Ganz anders verhält es sich mit dem Hörer, der das Wort nur mit den Ohren vernimmt. Während zwischen ihm und dem andern zunächst kein Unterschied wahrnehmbar ist, wenn sie im Gottesdienst sind; während beide auf derselben Bank sitzen, beider Augen auf den Prediger gerichtet sind und bei beiden sich scheinbar dieselbe Aufmerksamkeit findet, ist doch eine tiefe Kluft zwischen ihnen. Wer das Wort Gottes nicht zu seinem inneren Eigentum macht und es befolgt, ist gleich einem Mann, der sein Haus auf Sand baut.

Ein auf diese Weise gebautes Haus mag äußerlich fest und stark aussehen. Aber wenn die Fluten sich einstellen, wird der Unterschied zwischen diesem Haus und einem auf den Felsen gebauten offenbar. Das auf den Sand gebaute Haus fällt zusammen. So ist es mit dem das Wort nicht befolgenden Hörer. Den feindlichen Mächten, die auf die Seele einstürmen, fällt er sofort zur Beute; es sind dies Unglaube, Aberglaube, allerlei Sündendienst, Zweifel usw. Wenn er den Glauben überhaupt in sich hatte, so wird dies Kleinod ihm schnell geraubt.

Trösten wir uns doch ja nicht mit dem Gedanken, daß wir regelmäßig äußerlich in der Kirche sind und das Wort anhören! Nur das rechte Hören kann uns helfen. Vgl. Luk. 11, 28. W. Arndt

Sechster Sonntag nach Trinitatis

Matth. 19, 16—26

Wir Christen haben es alle Tage mit dem Geld zu tun. Geld und Gut gehört mit zum täglichen Brot. Verachtung des Geldes kann sündlich sein. Nicht arbeiten wollen und die Seinen nicht versorgen ist gegen Gottes Gebot, 2 Thess. 3, 10; 1 Tim. 5, 8. Sparen lehrt uns des Herrn Gebot, Joh. 6, 12; Spr. 13, 11. Geld ist auch nötig im Reich Gottes, Phil. 4, 15 ff., und zum Erweis der Nächstenliebe, 1 Tim. 6, 17 ff.; 2 Kor. 8 und 9. Es ist daher unumgänglich, daß wir uns gar oft und ernstlich mit Geldsachen beschäftigen.

Gerade darum ist es aber auch unbedingt nötig, daß wir uns immer wieder sagen lassen, wie gefährlich das Geld uns Christen werden kann. Wir wollen heute nicht an die denken, die draußen sind, sondern uns zeigen lassen,

Daß das Geld gerade uns Christen sehr gefährlich werden kann

1. Auch wir Christen können der Geldliebe erliegen
2. Diese Geldliebe ist seelenverderblich

1

Die Schrift sagt: Eph. 5, 5. Wie stellen wir uns gewöhnlich einen solchen Geizigen vor? Er lebt nur für das Geld, darbt selbst und läßt die Seinen hungern, betrügt und bestiehlt seine Mitmenschen und kennt kein Mitleid. Aber das sind nicht die einzigen Menschen, die dem Mammon zum Opfer fallen.

Was für ein Mann ist es aber, der nach unserm Text der Geldliebe erliegt? Trotz seiner Jugend ein Oberster, Luk. 18, 18, wohl der Synagoge, ein Mann, der die Religion nicht verachtete. Die Frage nach der Seligkeit lag ihm am Herzen. Er war bemüht, nach den Geboten Gottes zu leben. Dies war nicht nur äußerlicher Schein; der Herr liebte ihn, Mark. 10, 21, und lud ihn ein, ihm nachzufolgen, sein Jünger zu werden. Trotz alledem wurde das Geld ein Fallstrich für ihn.

Diese Geschichte soll uns zur Warnung dienen. Und damit wir nicht denken, wir stünden nicht in Gefahr, fügt der Herr die ersten Worte hinzu: V. 23—26. Prüfen wir uns! Wie leicht wird uns das Geld zur Hauptsache! Wenn Gott uns eine große Summe verlieren läßt, meinen wir nicht oft, wir hätten einen unerseßlichen Verlust erlitten? Murren wir nicht leicht, wenn der Herr eine Gabe für sich und sein Reich verlangt? Ja, wenn wir nicht der Geldliebe verfallen, ist es ein Wunder der göttlichen Allmacht und Gnade.

2

Die Gefahr ist um so größer, weil die Geldliebe oft gar nicht als etwas Schlimmes, ja wohl gar als etwas Tugendhaftes erscheint. Aber unser Text zeigt uns, wie seelenverderblich sie ist.

Aus Geldliebe wird der Jüngling ungehorsam gegen ein klares Gebot seines Gottes. Gerade so geht es auch heute. Geiz ist eine Wurzel alles Übels. Gott sagt z. B.: Gebt für das Reich Gottes nach Vermögen, helft den Armen, lügt und betrügt nicht usw. Der Geiz verleitet uns aber, diese Befehle Gottes zu mißachten. Wie kann aber der Glaube dabei bestehen?

Der Herr lud den Jüngling ein, ihm nachzufolgen und sein Jünger zu werden. Das Geld ist ihm aber lieber als sein Heiland. Leicht kann die Geldliebe auch uns verblenden, so daß wir unser Seelenheil dem Mammon opfern. Gewinn geht vor Gottesdienst; im Gotteshaus denken wir während der Predigt an Geschäfte. Denken wir an Judas!

Daß wir doch den Ernst der Lage recht im Auge behalten! Daß wir täglich über unser Herz wachen und Gott um Vergebung bitten! Daß wir vor allem recht erkennen, daß nur Gott uns vor dem Abfall bewahren kann! Nur Gott, aber er auch ganz gewiß, kann uns ins Himmelreich bringen.

Paul J. Kühnke

Siebter Sonntag nach Trinitatis

Matth. 13, 44—46

„Schatz über alle Schätze, o Jesu, liebster Schatz!“ So singen wir in einem Kirchenlied. Wie wenige Menschen haben diesen Schatz gefunden! Singen wir aber auch freudig mit jenem andern Lieberdichter: „Nichts auf der ganzen weiten Welt, Pracht, Wollust, Ehre, Freud' und Geld, wenn ich es recht besinne, kann mich ohn' dich g'nugsam laben?“ Dazu werden wir im heutigen Text ermuntert.

Der große, unvergleichliche Schatz, die köstliche Perle unserer Seligkeit, in Christo, unserm Heiland

1. Von diesem Schatz, dieser köstlichen Perle, weiß der natürliche Mensch rein nichts
2. So sucht auch der natürliche Mensch diesen Schatz, diese köstliche Perle, nicht von selbst; Gott läßt ihn sie aus Gnaden finden

1

a. „Schatz, köstliche Perle“, B. 44. 46. So beschreibt der Heiland das Himmelreich, also unsere Seligkeit in ihm selbst. Wie glücklich der, der im Besitz derselben ist und bereits ein Himmelsbürger! Er hat Vergebung der Sünden, Leben und Seligkeit. Er hat den Schatz über alle Schätze, Jesum, den Heiland der Sünder, Apost. 4, 12. Sein Sinnen und Denken ist auf das, was droben ist, gerichtet, Kol. 3, 1. 2. Sein Wandel ist ein Wandel der Heiligkeit, Röm. 6, 18. Er dient Gott, Röm. 6, 22, und seinem Nächsten, Matth. 23, 31—40. Er ist das Salz der Erde und das Licht der Welt, Matth. 5, 13—16. In Trübsal verzagt er nicht, Röm. 8, 28—34; Joh. 15, 18—20; 2 Kor. 1, 3—7. Er sehnt sich nach seiner ewigen Heimat, Hebr. 13, 14, nach dem neuen Jerusalem, wo sein wird Freude die Fülle, Friede für seine Seele und ewige Ruhe, Offenb. 21, 1—5.

b. Davon weiß der natürliche Mensch nichts. Es ist ihm ein „verborgener Schatz“, B. 44, eine Perle, deren Vorhandensein er nicht kennt, B. 46. Von Natur ist der Mensch ein Sünder, Joh. 3, 6, fremd und außer der Bürgerschaft Israels, ohne Hoffnung, ohne Gott in der Welt, Eph. 2, 11. 12. Der natürliche Mensch ist ein Sündendiener, Röm. 6, 16. 17; 1, 18—32; Gal. 5, 19—21. Er findet zwar seine Ergözung an der Sünde, aber nur zeitlich, Hebr. 11, 25; ja auch schon in der Zeit ruht der Fluch der Sünde auf ihm, Gal. 3, 10; und wenn er in seinen Sünden stirbt, ist er ewig verloren, Matth. 25, 41.

Auch denen ist das Himmelreich ein „verborgener Schatz“, die zwar nicht in offenbaren Sünden, wohl aber in Selbstgerechtigkeit leben, Matth. 5, 20, ja die selbst in der äußeren Christenheit sich befinden, aber doch noch mit ihrem Herzen an dieser Welt hängen und nicht alles dran-

geben (B. 44. 46: „verkaufte alles, was er hatte“) und ihrem Heilande nicht nachfolgen wollen, Mark. 8, 34—38.

Da prüfe sich nun jeder selbst, wie es mit ihm in dieser Hinsicht steht. Ohne Jesum ewig verloren!

2

a. Von selbst sucht der Mensch nicht den Schatz seiner Seligkeit. Ohne es zu wissen, stieh der Mensch im Gleichnis auf den „verborgenen Schatz im Ader“, B. 44. Er wußte nichts von dessen Vorhandensein, hatte auch kein Verlangen danach. Das Seligwerden aus Gnaden um Christi willen ist dem natürlichen Menschenherzen ein ganz fremder Gedanke; der gehört in die verborgene Weisheit Gottes, die Gott uns durch seinen Geist im Wort offenbart hat, 1 Kor. 2, 6—14.

b. Zwar sucht der natürliche Mensch nach „guten Perlen“, aber von der „einen köstlichen Perle“ weiß er nichts, B. 45. 46. Die Menschen suchen nach den, wie sie meinen, guten Perlen menschlicher Weisheit, irdischen Reichthums, eines vergnügten, sorgenfreien Daseins, toller Lustbarkeit und weltlichen Wesens, suchen aber nicht die „eine köstliche Perle“ ihrer Seligkeit in Christo. Ein etwaiges Sehnen nach Frieden und Erlösung im natürlichen Menschenherzen ist kein Sehnen nach dem Frieden und der Erlösung, die uns durch Christum teuer erworben worden ist.

c. Welche Freude nun aber über den gefundenen Schatz! B. 44. 46. Der Mensch im Gleichnis war nun bereit, alles dranzugeben um dieses Schatzes willen; die eine köstliche Perle galt ihm mehr als alles andere. So auch der Mensch, der seinen Heiland gefunden hat. Welche Freude! Wie gern gibt er nun auch alles andere daran um Christi willen, damit nichts seiner Seligkeit schade, Phil. 3, 7—11. Die Seligkeit durch Christum erworben, wird uns aus Gnaden geschenkt, Röm. 3, 24. Christus hat den Kaufpreis bezahlt. Durch den Glauben ergreifen wir den Schatz unserer Seligkeit.

Wie der Schatz, die köstliche Perle, unserer Seligkeit gefunden wird, darauf geht der Text nicht ein. Wir aber wissen es. Durch das Wort des Evangeliums wirkt der Heilige Geist den Glauben im Herzen.

Freuen wir uns, daß Gott uns aus Gnaden unsere Seligkeit in Christo hat finden lassen! Er erhalte uns in Gnaden zum ewigen Leben! Lied 249, 10.

J. G. C. Frick

Achter Sonntag nach Trinitatis

Mark. 8, 34—38

Unser Text mit seinen Parallelen, Matth. 16, 24—27; Luk. 9, 23—26, sagt uns nicht, wie man ein Christ und Jünger Jesu wird. Das hören wir unter anderm B. 27—33. Ausführen. Die Jünger

und wir alle sollen hier im Text lernen, wie nötig es ist, daß wir uns, wenn wir Jünger Jesu geworden sind, nun auch als solche in treuer Nachfolge unsers Herrn erweisen.

Die Notwendigkeit der Nachfolge Christi

Wir erkennen sie

1. aus Jesu Beschreibung dieser Nachfolge
2. aus den verderblichen Folgen der Unterlassung dieser Nachfolge

1

B. 34 zeigt uns Jesus, worin die Nachfolge Jesu besteht.

A. In der Nachfolge Jesu selbst. „Wer mir will nachfolgen, . . . der folge mir nach.“ Wem es wirklich ein Ernst ist mit seinem Christentum, der folge mir nach, gehe hinter mir her. Viele folgen dem Heiland nur äußerlich, hören vielleicht noch sein Wort, gehen zum Abendmahl usw., Matth. 15, 8; andere folgen dem Heiland wie Petrus einst, Luk. 22, 54. Sie sind oft so weit hinter ihm, daß sie nichts mehr von ihm hören oder sehen. Vgl. auch Joh. 6, 66. Da sind die Apostel dem Heiland besser nachgefolgt, Luk. 5, 11; Matth. 9, 9. Die Apostel schlossen sich eng an ihren Herrn. Es war ihnen ein Ernst mit ihrer Nachfolge. Joh. 6, 67—69. — Wie folgst du dem Heiland? Bist du stets nahe hinter ihm? Hörst du, bekennst du, befolgst du sein Wort? Joh. 10, 27. Wirst du ihm immer ähnlicher in deiner Gesinnung, Phil 2, 5, in deinem ganzen Wandel und Leben, in allen christlichen Tugenden und Werken, wie du sie an deinem Heiland siehst? 1 Petr. 2, 21.

B. Die Nachfolge Jesu besteht ferner in aufrichtiger Selbstverleugnung. „Wer mir will nachfolgen, der verleugne sich selbst.“ Dasselbe Wort wie bei Petri Verleugnung, Matth. 26, 70, nur in verstärkter Form. Nicht genug, daß wir nur einzelnen Dingen und Wünschen entsagen: Freitag kein Fleisch essen, in der Fastenzeit nicht tanzen. Nein, wer Jesus treulich nachfolgt, verleugnet sich selbst. Wie Petrus Matth. 26, 72 von Jesu, so müssen wir zu unserm alten Menschen sprechen: Ich kenne dich nicht; müssen unser Fleisch kreuzigen, Gal. 5, 24; unsern eigenen Willen unter Gottes Willen bändigen, mit Christo sprechen: Luk. 22, 42b; mit Paulus die eigene Gerechtigkeit zur Seite stoßen, Phil. 3, 7, 8.

C. Die wahre Nachfolge Jesu besteht schließlich im frühlichen, willigen Kreuztragen: „Wer mir will nachfolgen, der nehme sein Kreuz auf sich.“ Kreuz ist hier bildlich für allerlei Leiden, gerade auch schweres Leiden. Jeder Jünger soll sein Kreuz auf sich nehmen, das Christus gerade für ihn ausgesucht und bestimmt hat, das nicht zu schwer, nicht zu leicht ist, gerade recht für seinen Träger, immer gut und heilsam. Es sind vielleicht allgemeine Leiden, oder was sie als Christen um Christi willen leiden müssen. Die Weltfinder hassen alles Leiden, gehen ihm

so lange wie möglich aus dem Wege, tragen es gar mit Widerwillen und Murren. Aber die wahren Jünger und Nachfolger Jesu nehmen ihr ihnen von Christo zugetheiltes Kreuz auf sich täglich, Luk. 9, 23, und tragen es ihrem Heiland gerne und geduldig nach in der Gewißheit „Es ist herzlich gut gemeint mit der Christen Plagen“ usw., Lied 370, 10.

In der Nachfolge Christi handelt es sich wahrlich nicht um geringe Kleinigkeiten, sondern um hochwichtige Sachen, nicht um Sachen, die in unserm eigenen Ermessen stehen, die wir nach eigenem Belieben einrichten dürfen, sondern um unser ganzes Christenleben, wie es uns von Christo, unserm einzigen Heiland, selber vorgeschrieben ist. Sollte nicht das schon uns zur Treue in der Nachfolge des Herrn ermuntern?

2

Die Nachfolge Jesu darf nicht unterlassen werden.

A. Weil wir sonst das wahre Leben verlieren, V. 35. Wer sein Leben, sein natürliches, zeitliches Leben, erhalten will, wem das die Hauptsache ist, daß er hier bequeme Tage hat, nach seinem Willen, seinem Fleische lebt, nach Gott und seinem Wort nichts fragt, wer von den Dingen dieser Welt nichts um Christi willen aufgeben, sich nicht selbst verleugnen, nicht sein Kreuz tragen will, der wird seine Seele, sein eigentliches, das ewige Leben, verlieren. Welch schreckliches Los! Saul.

B. Weil wir sonst mehr verlieren, als die ganze Welt wert ist, V. 36, 37. Der Herr setzt hier den besten Fall. Selbst wenn jemand die ganze Welt gewönne, alle Pracht und Herrlichkeit, alle Güter und Freuden, allen Ruhm dieser Welt — was ja unmöglich ist — und er darüber Schaden litte an seiner Seele, seine Seele dabei verlöre, so hätte er nicht nur keinen Gewinn, sondern furchtbaren Verlust. Die ganze Welt könnte den Verlust seiner Seele nicht ersetzen. Ist die Seele verloren, dann ist alles verloren, dann ist auch der Besitz der ganzen Welt wertlos. Es gibt nur ein Lösegeld für die Seele, Christum und sein Blut. Wer Christum und seine Erlösung für die Güter dieser Erde hingibt, hat nun kein weiteres Lösegeld für die Seele. Judas.

C. Weil sich dann des Menschensohn auch unser in alle Ewigkeit schämen wird, V. 38. Diese Worte weisen auf das letzte große Kommen des Menschensohns, wenn er kommen wird in der Herrlichkeit seines Vaters mit seinen heiligen Engeln, zu vergelten einem jeglichen nach seinen Werken, Matth. 16, 27. Wer immer dann ein solcher gewesen ist, der sich hier auf Erden seines Heilandes, seiner Lehre, seines Betens, seines Kirchengehens, seines Christentums geschämt, nicht bekannt, sondern verleugnet hat hier unter diesem ehebrennerischen, sündigen Geschlecht, dessen wird sich der Heiland dann auch schämen, wird sich von ihm abwenden. Wie schrecklich! Matth. 25, 41.

Gott gebe, daß wir aufs neue gelernt haben, worin die rechte, wahre Nachfolge Jesu besteht und warum sie um keinen Preis unterlassen werden darf. Lied 280.

J. T. Roschke

Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

The "Christian Herald" on Lutheran Union.—Its May issue has this item: "We reported two months back that there was a doctrinal hurdle between the American Lutherans and the United Lutherans, keeping them apart in their discussions on joining their forces. Now we report that they have taken the hurdle and find themselves a long step nearer union. The question was one of Biblical infallibility. The statement on which they agree is this: 'By virtue of a unique operation. . .'" (Our readers are familiar with this statement in the Pittsburgh Declaration.) "Three large bodies of Lutherans—the United, American, and Missouri Synod bodies—contain more than 3,500,000 of the 4,800,000 Lutherans in the United States. They stand in a fair way now, with this agreement of doctrinal statement to work on, to overcome the open disagreement which has separated them. We look for big Lutheran news in 1939."

Not so fast! We fear that it will take more than half a year to get the United Lutheran Church to accept, as a body, a statement which might be understood as teaching the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of all Scripture. Compare what a reviewer in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* (U. L. C.) says on the booklets of Drs. Klinck and Arndt in the *S. S. Teacher-Training Series*: "In both books the Bible is assumed to be the verbally inspired, absolutely infallible revelation of God. Accordingly, its statements are taken to be final, not only in matters of faith and life, but also in matters of history, geography, science, and the like. Of scientific, critical study of the sources there is not a trace. Nor is there any indication that the philosophical, theological, historical, sociological, and psychological researches of modern times have made any contribution whatsoever to our understanding of life and its problems. Perhaps the type of treatment was necessitated by space limits or by a consideration of the needs and abilities of the persons for whom the books were prepared—present and prospective Sunday-school teachers; perhaps dogmatic presuppositions had something to do with it. Whatever the reasons for the type of treatment, the fact remains that this treatment is limited to uncritically interpreted Biblical materials. Here lie both the strength and the weakness of the books. For those who accept the fundamental thesis that the Bible is infallible in every detail, the treatment will prove, in the main, highly satisfactory; for those who do not, it will not. It may probably be assumed that the persons for whom the books were specifically written do accept it. For them, therefore, the books could hardly be better."

We doubt, too, that the American Lutheran Church will, as a body, be satisfied with a declaration which does not explicitly declare for the inerrancy of all parts of Scripture. And we do not know why the Missouri Synod is mentioned in this connection. "They," U. L. C., A. L. C., and Missouri, "stand in a fair way now, with this agreement to work on, to overcome," etc. We cannot well "work on" this agreement. Besides, it is not only the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture which is here

involved. The *Christian Herald* should not speak of "a doctrinal hurdle," which is keeping the Lutherans apart. There are differences in other doctrines, just as important as the one mentioned, which keep the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference apart from the United Lutheran Church. E.

Un-Lutheran Teaching in the U. L. C. A.—The article by Dr. A. J. Traver on "The Means of Grace," published in the *Lutheran* of May 10, contains some good Lutheran doctrine. "Our part is *only* to accept what Jesus Christ offers. *Grace is a gift.* . . . How do we receive this grace? We believe that God uses *means* by which He sends His grace upon us. . . . Suppose there were no Word and no Sacraments. This would make us depend on our own human reason. . . . As we need grace, so we need the means by which grace is made available for us." The article, however, presents also some un-Lutheran teaching. We read: "Lutherans have not been satisfied with the statement that the Bible *contains* the Word of God. This is of course true, but not all the truth. It might mean that the Bible contained a great deal that was error. Then it would mean that we would have to select the true from the false in the Bible, a most dangerous liberty. Naturally, we would be influenced by our own desires. We would accept what we wanted to accept and reject what we did not want. The Bible is the Word of God in the statement of our faith. *It is true in all matters that pertain to religion.*" (Italics our own.) "It is not a text for biology or for chemistry. It knows nothing of electricity or of airplanes. There is no reason that it should. These are matters for the investigation and discovery of the human mind. But man by his own wisdom cannot know God. *The Bible is the revelation of God to us, the gracious gift of salvation comes to us through the Bible.*" (Italics in original.) The *Lutheran* is repeating here what it has been emphasizing the last few years. It wants the Church to know that it rejects the teaching that *every* statement made by the holy writers is true. "It is true in all matters that pertain to religion," but in all other matters, scientific and the like, its statements need not be accepted. That is un-Lutheran teaching. The Lutheran statement "The Bible is the Word of God" means nothing because of the restriction "It is true in all matters that pertain to religion." Our readers will remember that a layman found the U. L. C. Declaration on the Word of God and Scripture unacceptable because of its contradictory teachings. He wrote: "In Section 5 this declaration says: 'We therefore accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.' What as to matters that do not pertain to His revelation and our salvation? Are some portions of the Scriptures not infallible? Is not that a plausible inference? It would appear to this writer that in Section 6 this position is contradicted when it is asserted: 'Therefore we believe that the whole body of Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God.' We can sympathize with this layman. We must confess that our theological mind works just like the layman's mind. We do not know how the minds of those theologians work who can say in one breath that Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God and that some portions of Scripture are not true. Least of all can we understand how *Lutheran* theologians can thus speak of the Bible.

Dr. Traver then goes on to utter some most un-Lutheran thoughts on the Lord's Supper. "Bread and wine are the earthly elements. The body and blood of Christ are the heavenly gifts promised in the Sacrament. We must not place a crass or unnatural interpretation on these gifts of the Sacrament. They are the life of Christ, freely given for us. As the bread and wine become a part of the body through eating, so the Christ becomes a part of our souls through faith." That is a denial of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. Any Reformed theologian would subscribe to the teaching that what Christ gives us to eat and to drink is "the life of Christ, freely given for us." The Reformed have always taught that the words "body," "blood" mean the efficacy and benefits of Christ's death.

When the Pittsburgh Statement (on Inspiration, etc.) was accepted, the church-papers stated: "All controverted points of difference between the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church have now been amicably adjusted so far as the two commissions are concerned." All controverted points of difference? Within the U. L. C. body the Reformed doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper is publicly proclaimed. (See also *C. T. M.*, VIII, p. 544, on an article in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* of October, 1936.) The A. L. C. teaches the Lutheran doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper. Surely not all controverted points of difference between these two bodies have been amicably adjusted.

Then there is the doctrine of conversion. Dr. Traver does not touch on this in his article, but our subject is: Un-Lutheran Teaching in the U. L. C. A. U. L. C. theologians have written the following: "Others, after the manner of Missouri, have been so cautious lest they should claim for man any credit for his salvation—a very laudable desire—that they have, in order to give all the glory to God's grace, failed to recognize that man's part in the work of salvation is essential, even though it is not meritorious." "Conversion is largely one's own act. God first makes it possible; but then the responsibility rests upon ourselves to determine whether or not we will comply with the truth brought to our understanding." "If we inquire what it is that influences men one way or the other when the Spirit of God brings them face to face with Christ and urges them to accept the Savior, the answer is that they are influenced by the motives, good or evil, which stir in their hearts and which they finally put first." These and many other similar pronouncements appeared in official organs of the U. L. C. and in text-books published within this body. We need not indicate the sources here,—the U. L. C. men will readily admit that synergistic teaching is tolerated by their Church. We cannot understand why editors of Lutheran papers will say that all controverted points of difference have now been amicably adjusted. E.

The Editor does Not Agree with the Contributor.—In the article "Some Thoughts on Inspiration," published in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, May issue, Dr. Hjalmar W. Johnson of the Augustana Synod uttered several un-Lutheran thoughts. He said: "You sometimes hear conscientious Lutheran pastors make the statement that unless you accept the verbal inspiration theory, you are not a con-

sistent Lutheran." "The human element appears also in certain discrepancies which the student of the Scriptures will observe. . . . The human element appears also with sad realism in the imprecatory psalms. . . . In these passages (Ps. 69:24; 58:6-10; 109:8, 9, 10; 137:9) the human — or shall I say inhuman? — element is sadly evident." "Christ Himself affirmed that Moses was not correct on the subject of divorce. If Christ felt free to take issue with Moses on the subject of divorce, which concerns *human* beings, must we insist that Genesis is a source book in geology, which deals not with human beings but with *inanimate* reality?" "With specific reference to one theory widely prevalent among many earnest Christians, it may be noted that even so theologically conservative a Church as the Roman Catholic does not teach the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. . . . In the well-known Catholic weekly *Our Sunday Visitor* (Nov. 4, 1934) this paragraph appears: 'The Church has never taught the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. All that we are bound to believe is that every book, and every part of every book, in both the Old and the New Testament is the Word of God. In the many translations of the Bible which we have today it would be impossible to hold that every word was inspired, because that would mean that the translator as well as the original writer, of the Scriptures had the special assistance of Almighty God.'"

The editor of the *Journal*, in an addendum, takes the contributor severely to task. "There are a number of points at which I find myself at variance with the learned author of the foregoing article." We have space for only some of the points repudiated by Dr. Dell. "What the Catholic Church teaches or does not teach can hardly be a criterion for the Lutheran Church." As to the statement of the contributor "You sometimes hear conscientious Lutheran pastors make the statement that, unless you accept the verbal inspiration theory, you are not a consistent Lutheran. What can be done to help such brethren realize that such statements are by no means a defense of Lutheranism but, on the contrary, constitute a lapse from it?" the editor says: "As I am one of 'such brethren' who have lapsed from Lutheranism by stating that belief in verbal inspiration is truly Lutheran, I rise to defend my position once more. 'Verbal inspiration' and 'inspiration' are the same thing. If the Bible is inspired, it is verbally inspired. If it is not verbally inspired, it is not inspired at all. . . . When our synodical constitution says that we accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as our authority, they are breathing a faith in verbal inspiration; for Scriptures are words. If they are words of men, they have no authority. If they are the Word of God, they are inspired words. When the Missouri Synod states: 'We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called "theological deduction," but it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 2:13,' there can be no doubt that this large body of Lutherans 'officially' teaches verbal inspiration and does not consider it a theory. . . . If only men are inspired and not the words which they wrote, how can we say in our synodical confessions that the canonical *Scriptures* are our authority? How can we say that the Bible 'as a whole and in all its parts' is the Word of God? The Bible in all its parts is words, nothing

but words. If there is no verbal inspiration, the Bible is not inspired. When we, therefore, speak of verbal inspiration, we are speaking of the fact of inspiration and not of some 'man-made' theory as to the method of inspiration." "The Holy Spirit used the words of Scripture to convince us that the words of Scripture are reliable. And you say that Lutherans do not 'officially' believe in verbal inspiration? Pardon me if I say that I am unable to follow you." "What was Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament? He said: 'The Scriptures cannot be broken.' He quoted the Scriptures as reliable truth, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets' (Luke 24). He evidently thought that Moses was inspired. But Dr. Johnson says: 'Christ Himself affirmed that Moses was not correct on the subject of divorce.' . . . The question here is: Did Moses write what God gave him to write at that time? Jesus does not condemn Moses for writing what he wrote. He condemns the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, which made an inferior law necessary." "Toward the end the author quotes from Dr. Sodergren: 'If some other brother should insist that physical death came into the world with the fall of Adam and Eve,—as Milton does in *Paradise Lost*,—when God has written into the strata of the earth a record of death long before Adam, we have no right to blame the Bible for this brother's interpretation.' I see here, and elsewhere in that last part, a surrender to the theory of evolution. If the fact of verbal inspiration must be called a theory in order to make room alongside it for another theory, which even men of science vigorously dispute, our faith is in a bad way. You not only condemn Milton, but you condemn St. Paul, who wrote: 'As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

The concluding paragraph reads: "I could say a great deal more, but I desist. The article by Dr. Johnson is being printed because pressure was brought to bear by his brethren. But I could not let it go as an expression of the faith of the American Lutheran Conference. I could not pass by without challenge the condescending statement that brethren who believe in verbal inspiration—who believe, in other words, that the Bible is a reliable record of revealed truth—should be corrected in their Lutheranism."

E.

D. Neu über Walther und die Schrift, betitelt "Walther and the Church". Die eben genannte Schrift hat bekanntlich als Verfasser die Doktoren Dallmann, Dau und Engelber. D. Neu schreibt darüber in der „Kirchlichen Zeitschrift“: „[Das Buch] ist als Festgabe gedacht zur Erinnerung an die Einwanderung der Sachsen vor hundert Jahren. Es hätte dem Gedächtnis an dies folgenreiche Ereignis etwas gefehlt, wenn nicht ein Buch wie dieses erschienen wäre; denn die drei Schriften, die hier in gedrängter Form dargeboten werden, waren von grundlegender Natur für die Missionsynode und weit über diese hinaus. Und sollten sie in ihren Hauptgedanken weiterwirken, so mußten sie in englischer Sprache dargeboten werden.“

„Bei der Lektüre der drei Beiträge, die zur Würdigung Walthers hinzugefügt werden, möchte man vielleicht einmal den Eindruck haben, als griffe die Würdigung zu hoch. Aber auch Männer, die Zeitgenossen, ja Gegner

Walthers gewesen sind, schlugen bei seinem Tod kaum geringere Töne an. Die Luthardische „Kirchenzeitung“ schrieb: „Mit ihm ist einer der Großen in der Kirche Christi heimgegangen, ein Mann, der nicht nur in der kirchlichen Geschichte Amerikas eine epochemachende Persönlichkeit und dort der hervorragende Führer und Sammler der Lutheraner war, sondern dessen Wirksamkeit in der lutherischen Kirche aller Weltteile als eine mächtig anregende empfunden wurde. Der Erfolg seiner Arbeit ist in der neueren Geschichte unserer Kirche fast beispiellos und kennzeichnet ihn nicht nur als einen Mann von großen Anlagen, eifernem Fleiß und seltener Energie, sondern läßt in ihm eine providentielle Persönlichkeit erkennen, wie der Herr seiner Kirche sie sendet, wenn er sie besondere Wege führen will.“ Und Dr. Siegmund Fritschel schrieb (Kirchenblatt, 1. Juni 1887): „In dem Heimgegangenen verliert die lutherische Kirche einen ihrer mannhaftesten Streiter, ihrer segneten Zeugen, ihrer mannhaftesten Theologen. Seit dem Jahre 1839 hat er die reichen Gaben seines Geistes in den Dienst der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas gestellt und an ihrem Aufbau innerhalb der Missouri-Synode mit ganzer, voller, rüchhaltloser Hingebung ohne Ermüden, mit freudiger Begeisterung bis an sein Ende gearbeitet. Und Gottes Barmherzigkeit hat auf das Werk seiner Hände Gedeihen gelegt und ihn die Frucht seiner Arbeit schauen lassen, wie es wenig Menschen vergönnt ist. Die Missouri-Synode mit ihrer gewaltigen Ausbreitung, ihrer festgefühten Organisation, ihrer rastlosen kirchlichen Tätigkeit, ihrer eigenartigen, die lutherische Bekenntnislehre mit ihren Sonderlehren zu fester Geschlossenheit zusammenfassenden Theologie ist im eminenten Sinn sein Werk, der er den Stempel seines Geistes in allen Beziehungen aufgedrückt hat und in der ihm die Verwirklichung der Gedanken seines Lebens noch mit seinen eigenen Augen zu sehen beschieden war. Sie selbst hinwiederum, die von ihm gegründete und geführte Synode, sah in ihm ihre Macht gleichsam verkörpert, und es dürften sehr wenig Fälle sich nachweisen lassen, in denen eine hervorragende Persönlichkeit in der von ihr geleiteten kirchlichen Gemeinschaft einen gleich tiefgreifenden und alles beherrschenden Einfluß ausgeübt hat.“ — Es wird uns auch wiederholt bezeugt, daß Dr. S. Fritschel die Hoffnung auf eine künftige Verständigung mit der von Walther gegründeten Synode nie aufgegeben hat.“ A.

Bedeutung des Lutherischen Weltkonvents. Im „Kirchenblatt“ vom 20. Mai dieses Jahres schreibt Dr. Anubel, der Präses der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas, in einem Artikel, betitelt „Schifflein der Kirche“, über den Lutherischen Weltkonvent. Er spricht sich unter anderem auch aus über die Bedeutung des Weltkonvents. Er sagt: „Endlich tauchte das bestimmte Bestreben auf, der tiefinnerlichen Einigkeit der Lutheraner in der Welt klaren Ausdruck zu verleihen. Diese Kundgebung der Glaubenseinheit besteht jetzt im Lutherischen Weltkonvent.“

Der Weltkonvent ist nach der Beschreibung Dr. Anubels also nicht eine freie Konferenz von Lutheranern zur Herstellung wahrer Glaubenseinheit durch Besprechung der bestehenden Lehrdifferenzen, sondern der Lutherische Weltkonvent ist „Kundgebung der Glaubenseinheit“. Wer aber die Lutheraner in der Welt kennt, der weiß, daß sie untereinander sehr uneinig sind. Nun kann man aber erst dann in Wahrheit der Glaubenseinheit Ausdruck verleihen, wenn sie bereits hergestellt und wirklich vorhanden ist. Wer einer Glaubenseinheit Ausdruck verleihen will, die nicht vorhanden ist, treibt Unionisterei. Davor warnt uns die Schrift.

F. G. Brunn

Aus Argentinien. Einem Briefe unsers Bruders P. A. T. Kramer, in Bahía Blanca, Argentinien, wohnhaft, entnehmen wir einige interessante Sätze: „überall wird zweisprachige Arbeit verlangt. In Rio Colorado wird man beim nächsten Besuch wohl auch um eine englische Predigt nebenbei bitten. Vorläufig rechne ich mit sechs Konfirmandenklassen für dieses Jahr; drei oder vier Tausen, wahrscheinlich in spanischer Sprache. Nächste Woche will ich deutsche und spanische Repetitionsfragen fertigstellen, um unsern Pastoren (vor allen Dingen aber mir selbst) diese Arbeit etwas praktischer und leichter zu machen. . . . Das Manuskript der spanischen Augsburgerischen Konfession ist längst weg, das Manuskript der Agende ebenfalls. Jetzt kommt ein spanisches Gebetbüchlein und die Katechismuszusammenfassung. . . . Ich habe jetzt allen Erntes einen zweiten Mann für dieses Gebiet verlangt. Soll ich meine Zeit der eigentlichen Stadtarbeit widmen, so kann ich nicht die Außenposten behalten. In Médenos allein könnte eine Schule von annähernd vierzig Kindern zustande kommen. Hier sind Kinder. Wenn ich wenigstens einen guten Lehrer hätte, der den Kinderunterricht an den beiden Stellen mir abnähme! Und die Ausdehnungsmöglichkeiten an der Bahnlinie nach Westen sind noch nicht abzusehen. Es ist alles Sammelarbeit an zerstreuten und nicht betreuten lutherischen Einwanderern. Das 'lutherisch', bitte, etwas skeptisch aufzufassen; manchmal kennen sie nur den Namen.“

Von einer neuen Stelle, wo er deutsch predigt, schreibt Missionar Kramer: „Sofort mußte ich auch spanisch predigen, und für den nächsten Gottesdienst wollen sie auch ihre vielen englischen Nachbarn einladen. Leider ist die Zeit nicht reif, um in einer Sprache arbeiten zu können.“

Gott segne reichlich die Evangeliumsverkündigung im fernen Süden unsers Kontinents!

H.

Brunner, Lacy, and Union Seminary. — Under this heading the Rev. C. D. Whiteley, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Albemarle, N. C., reviews Dr. Lacy's reply to the objections of the Mecklenburg and Concord presbyteries raised against Dr. Brunner's lecturing in Union Seminary. Dr. Brunner, as our readers know, is a modernistic Barthian. Dr. Lacy is president of the formerly orthodox Presbyterian Union Seminary in Richmond, Va. Dr. Whiteley is an orthodox Presbyterian graduate of Union Seminary. From now very liberal Union Theological Seminary Rev. J. Scherer, liberal U. L. C. pastor in Richmond, last summer obtained his supply speakers while he was on his protracted summer vacation. The two presbyteries represent 126 ministers, nearly one third of the ministerial membership of the Synod of North Carolina, one of the synods controlling Union Theological Seminary. Answering President Lacy, Pastor Whiteley (as reported in the *Christian Beacon*, March 2, 1939) says: "We would rather see its doors (Union Seminary's) closed than see its platform used as a springboard for modern doubt and unbelief, be that unbelief heralded by a theologian with world acclaim or by the proverbial crossroads skeptic." The reasons, he next shows, that led Dr. Lacy to allow Dr. Brunner to speak at Union Seminary "cast an ominous shadow across our Southern Church. Why invite a person to lecture at Union Seminary who denies the full trustworthiness of the Bible?" Dr. Lacy invited Dr. Brunner to speak at Union, first, because he "is regarded today as one of the great evangelical figures

of Continental Europe." But "does Dr. Lacy think one can be a great evangelical figure and at the same time elevate a heathen conception of the universe above the Word of God? Dr. Brunner is on record in these words: 'The Bible is by no means free of errors, notably the story of creation, which science has proved to be erroneous.' That statement does not commend itself to some of us as great or evangelical. It rather sounds like Satan's own language to the primal pair in Eden when he said: 'Ye shall *not* surely die' (Gen. 3:4), even though God had said: 'Ye *shall* surely die' (Gen. 2:17). It seems that the only difference is that Dr. Brunner denies the first chapter of Genesis, and Satan denied just part of the second." Dr. Whiteley continues: "There is one other thing wrong with Dr. Brunner's statement; namely, it is *false*. It is not true that science has 'proved' the creation story in Genesis to be erroneous. To remain within the bounds of truth, he should have said: 'I accept a hypothesis which, if proved, would prove the creation story of Genesis to be erroneous.' Dr. Brunner's statement is false for two reasons: first, because God's Word declares it to be false; second, because the majority of outstanding scientists declare it to be false [?]. Dr. Brunner says that he is an evolutionist, and, of course, evolution is the hypothesis which, as he claims, has proved the creation story to be erroneous. Many scientists accept this hypothesis, but no one worthy of the name 'scientist' will say it has been proved. Then there are many of the truly great in the scientific world who call this hypothesis a figment of the imagination, while others call it the product of a distorted mind." . . . "Again, Dr. Lacy says, 'Dr. Brunner is the guest professor this year of Princeton Seminary, an institution which for over a century and a quarter has been closely associated with our seminary' (Richmond Union Seminary). 'But is Dr. Lacy ignorant of what has happened at Princeton since its reorganization? Or does he know and yet mean to say that it makes no difference to him and the faculty at Union? Before he gives Dr. Brunner's connection with Princeton as a reason for bringing him to Union, he should recall that the name of a professor-elect of that institution was not allowed to come before the last Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. since it was generally believed that he would not be confirmed because of his radical views. When one remembers that this General Assembly was controlled and dominated by signers of the Auburn Affirmation and their sympathizers, it is certainly a questionable compliment which Dr. Lacy hands to Dr. Brunner, and is meaningless as a reason for having him lecture at U. T. S., unless Dr. Lacy intended to serve notice on the Southern Church that he proposes to direct Union along the 'inclusive policy' road, now the avowed policy of Princeton." . . . "What does Dr. Lacy mean by the following statement: 'From the founding of these lectureships it has been the policy to bring to our seminary certain outstanding religious thinkers without requiring that in every detail they reflect the opinion held by our own denomination'? Does Dr. Lacy and the faculty mean to say that Dr. Brunner's denial of the infallibility of the Bible is a mere detail? Is such a denial a contradiction of some particular 'opinion' held by our own denomination? If so, how things have changed, at least in certain quarters!"

The final shaft which Dr. Whiteley hurls at Dr. Lacy is this: "In con-

clusion, one is amazed to find that some feel that an 'intellectual hot-house' would result from keeping the testimony of a great school of prophets, both in class and on the lecture platform, true to the doctrine that the Bible is the Word of God." This comes as a reply to one of President Lacy's "reasons" for letting Brunner lecture at Richmond, namely, that without the "wider [liberal] culture of Continental scholars" his seminary would become a mere "intellectual hothouse" rearing pastors who are helpless against the rigors and cold blasts of facts and reason.

To us this whole controversy seems more than a mere incident in provincial Presbyterian history. In the first place, it shows very clearly Brunner's liberal position over against the Bible and Princeton's own tragic lowering of doctrinal standards. In the second place, it demonstrates how rapidly Modernism seeps through an entire Church after it has once gained a foothold in its scholastic centers. And finally, the courage of the little Mecklenburg and Concord Presbyterian groups, resisting its modernistic leaders, may be noticed with profit also in wider church circles.

J. T. M.

The Rationalism of Barthianism. — Dr. A. MacRae, professor of Old Testament, Faith Theological Seminary, in the *Christian Beacon* deplors the presence of Barthianism at Princeton Seminary, claiming that, with Brunner in a key position at this school, "the Word of Scripture is no longer the supreme authority in the theology taught there," for the "very chair from which Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield taught is now occupied by one who denies the verbal inspiration of the Bible." The attitude of Barthians toward the Bible is indeed altogether different from that of the old teachers at Princeton. "They make Scripture authoritative only in those matters which they consider involved in the personal religion of the reader, and rule out all else as unimportant. Anything dealing with matter, with the world, with history, and the like, they regard as non-essential and possibly as entirely erroneous. To them Scripture is no longer authoritative for anything but personal religion. And who is to say which statements of Scripture are a part of personal religion? The historic Christian belief in the Word of God is thus replaced by a vague attitude which keeps the historic terminology but robs it of its historic content. Human philosophy has become the source of knowledge, instead of divine revelation. God's infallible guide has been replaced by an extremely fallible substitute. It is the very similarity in outward expression which makes Barthianism so dangerous. Unbelief is easier to swallow in a sugar-coated pill than in a bitter-tasting powder, but its effects are no less harmful." Dr. Brunner denied his belief in verbal inspiration in his very opening address at Princeton Seminary. "This," Dr. MacRae says, "was no surprise to any who were familiar with Brunner's works, for he is one of that class of mediating theologians which tries to cling to some of the doctrines of historic Christianity while rejecting the final authority of that source upon which Christian theology has always been based."

While Barthianism thus holds forth at Princeton, the *Presbyterian Tribune* (March 16, 1939) rejoices at the fact that today "little is left to current Fundamentalism." "Fortunately," exults the periodical, "with

the exception of one or two minor skirmishes all is now quiet on the theological front." "Of course," it admits, "we cannot tell when the battle will break out again in all its ancient virulence, but it looks as though we are in for an era of theological good feeling. The conservatives are not so conservative, or at least not so militant, and the liberals are not so sure of themselves, as they were a few years ago, when Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney was the self-appointed knight of reaction. His occasional Cassandra calls may be as strident as ever, but they have lost their sometime magic, and in consequence his followers have been reduced to a weedy segment of their former battalions." The reference no doubt is to the Orthodox Presbyterians and the Bible Presbyterians, who have no large following. J. T. M.

A Presbyterian Opposed to Strict Separation of Church and State. —

Writing in the *Presbyterian*, Dr. A. T. Allis opposes acceptance of a proposed revision of chapter 23 in the Westminster Confession. The old version, in its American form, is as follows: "As nursing fathers it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty to discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger." It is now proposed to change this to read: "It [the civil government] may not assume the functions of religion. It must grant equal rights to every religious group, showing no favor and granting no power to one above another." Dr. Allis offers this comment: "There are two important phrases here. The first is 'every religious group.' It is particularly to be noted that it does not say 'Christian group.' This phrase, consequently, represents not merely the surrender but the direct repudiation of the recognized principle that this is a Christian nation. Jews, Mormons, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucianists, and Hindus, all constitute 'religious groups,' but they are not 'Christian groups.' The second important phrase is this: 'showing no favor and granting no power to one above another.' It will be observed that nothing is said here about the recognized democratic principle of majority rule. Let us take a concrete illustration. A certain community is made up almost entirely of Christians, members or adherents of Christian churches. There is one Jewish merchant in that community. According to the above declaration, it would be improper for the municipal authorities to pass a Sunday closing law or to permit the voters to decide the question by popular vote. Not merely this, it would be the duty of Presbyterians who took the statement of their confession of faith seriously and felt it their duty to comply with its teachings, to strive to prevent the passage of such an ordinance or, if such an ordinance were on the statute books, to work for its repeal, on the ground that it showed favor and granted power to one religious group above another."

The proposed revision stands for strict separation of Church and State. The reasoning of Dr. Allis is faulty. The submitted version does not exclude the possibility of a Presbyterian's working for a Sunday closing law. It merely makes it wrong for him to work for the passage of such a law on *religious* grounds. A.

Methodist Union.—When in May of this year the representatives of the Northern Methodists, the Southern Methodists, and the Protestant Methodists met in Kansas City, the amalgamation of these bodies, which had been under way for several years, was consummated. Having stated after the reading of each one of the five declarations of unification: "We do so declare," the assembly made this affirmation: "To the Methodist Church thus established we do solemnly swear our allegiance, and upon all its life and service we do reverently invoke the blessing of Almighty God." The vote for union, reports say, was unanimous. When it had been given and announced, the choir sang Haendel's "Hallelujah Chorus," doubtlessly expressing the feelings of the delegates, who can well be imagined to have been in a high state of spiritual exaltation.

We have but few comments to make. The Methodist Church, the name by which the denomination will be known, the second-largest Protestant body in our country, has 46,255 congregations, 21,687 ordained ministers, 15,969 local preachers, 7,856,060 members, 5,926,155 Sunday-school pupils, and property which is valued at \$656,474,867. The body is divided into six jurisdictions. "The bishops are no longer to be elected for the entire Church by representatives chosen from the entire Church; instead they are to be elected for service within jurisdictions by the jurisdictional conferences." (*Christian Century*.) A sort of supreme court has been formed, with authority to pronounce on the constitutionality of whatever any Methodist conference may resolve.

If these Methodists were really one in faith, it was not wrong for them to unite in one organization. Whether Modernism, which to a frightful extent had affected the Northern Methodist Church, will now be checked or whether it will merely be given more opportunity for expansion will have to be seen. A.

Southern Methodists Plan to Fight Union.—Under this heading the *Christian Beacon*, organ of the Bible Presbyterian Church (the millennialistic group that separated from the Machen division) some time ago reported that leading lay members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South were taking steps to forestall any union with the Northern Methodists or with any other organization in which the rightful owners would have a very small voice and vote. "There has been organized," it says, "in Atlanta, Ga., the Laymen's Organization for Preservation of the Southern Methodist Church to accomplish just what its name implies. This organization plans to engage the services of competent legal talent to represent it in such litigation as may be entailed to secure to them their rights and interests in the various church properties. It is expected that many of these lawyers will serve in an advisory capacity in cooperation with the Legal Committee. The intense feeling against union appears to be quite spontaneous, and is evidenced by individual actions taken in various States and communities by small as well as large congregations." The report next quotes the *Southern Methodist Layman*, the official publication of the above-mentioned Laymen's Organization, as saying: "We are at the crossing of the ways and must make an early decision to do one of three things: (1) decide—as many have—that the Church is not worth saving and not criticize those members who

follow thousands of others and withdraw from it; (2) aid and assist all of those members who feel that it is best to organize independent Methodist churches now; (3) request our legal committee to employ paid attorneys, who shall immediately take steps in the United States or other civil courts, to protect the rights of three million Southern Methodists, who were ignored and were denied their rights through the aid of an ecclesiastical conspiracy of silence." Other excerpts from the report read as follows: "I am not in favor of surrendering the name Methodist Episcopal South if there is a possible chance, legally, of retaining and using it. I cannot believe that any court of the United States after the presentation of our case, showing the Machiavelian tactics employed by the bishops to suppress the discussion of their plans, and the secrecy actually surrounding their every move, will hesitate to enjoin the Uniting Conference." Quotation by C. J. Steward, Augusta, Ga., one of the original members of the Laymen's Organization. — "Why has unification come about? No one knows. It came from the top and is supposed to have been originated by the bishops, elders, and a few preachers." — "How did unification get passed? It was kept almost a secret, not being discussed but in a few churches by the pastors, and was not at all discussed by the elders. Only preachers and a few hand-picked laymen voted. In other words, the majority of the members of the Southern Methodist Church do not realize what is going on. Most of them have great confidence in the bishops, elders, and preachers of our Church and cannot believe what they are doing, and I am afraid it is going to be too late in many churches when they wake up to what has been pulled over them." — "What will be the effect? The Northern Church is twice as large and therefore will have the majority, and we shall have to take the consequences." — "What do we gain? Nothing! What do we lose? Control of our Church and \$350,000,000 worth of property." When the history of the Methodist Church union will be written in the future, this comparatively unknown side of the picture ought to be shown, too. And readers acquainted with church-union movements will not find it extraordinary; just so unions have been engineered before. J. T. M.

Infidelity in Various Manifestations. — "The German Church at Auburn, N. Y.," as the *Christian Beacon* (April 6, 1939) reports, "was the scene of a church dinner when Jews and Germans sat down together in fellowship. President Roosevelt sent congratulations to the Rev. Ralph A. Philbrook reading as follows: 'This coming together of Jews and Christians in common worship of the ever-living and true God exemplifies in a striking way the highest teachings of the Old and New Testaments.'" In an editorial, "Unbelief," the *Beacon* writes of such flagrant unionism: "When a Protestant minister permits an unconverted Jew to come in and administer in his pulpit, you do not have brotherhood or the felicitations of religious union but an abomination of the Lord and apostasy. Such procedures also will never lead the Jews to be saved, and we want them to be saved, because we love them and want them to receive the true Messiah and accept the gift of eternal life."

In Mercer University, at Macon, Georgia, the students sent a letter to thousand Baptist ministers, stating that the instructors had asserted: "The Bible is not divinely inspired; Adam and Eve are myths; the Bible

is contradictory; it was not necessary for Christ to die in order that man might be free from sin, and it is unnecessary for any one to believe in Christ to be saved."—In Russia, at Easter, the Godless League urged all antireligious workers to redouble their efforts during the Easter week-end. Christianity, it was said, fosters war, and in the conclusion of the announcement it was claimed: "In the U. S. S. R. Easter is one of the most harmful traditions of the past. To begin with, Easter each year attracts many believers away from the urgent work connected with the spring sowing campaign and revives drunkenness." In Cleveland, Ohio, "national leaders of Protestant and Jewish faiths" recently held symposiums in various Jewish synagogues, Dr. E. D. Jones, president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and Rabbi Silver discussing "War"; Dr. R. W. Sockman, director of Union Theological Seminary, and Rabbi Freehof debating on "The Crisis in Civilization"; and Bishop Francis J. McConnell and Rabbi Lazaron feeding foolish listeners on a similar subject. The *Christian Beacon* remarks on this: "The Federal Council of Churches claims to speak for twenty million Protestants and to be the voice of Protestantism in America; but in this announcement we find one present and one past president of the Federal Council appearing publicly and making common cause with the leaders of Judaism, who hate the person of Christ and teach that He was an illegitimate son of Mary by a Roman soldier. They have gone in the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and the gainsaying of Korah."

But Modernism is asserting itself also in the Lutheran churches of our country. The *Lutheran* (April 12, 1939) publishes without any comment or criticism a letter, "Soul Relief, Not Creeds, Called For," signed by one John R. Strevig, who writes among other things as follows: "Dogmas may come and go, but Jesus' word shall go on forever. The old theological phraseology gives way to the new. Instead of the 'new birth' we speak of 'remaking human nature.' Instead of 'vicarious suffering,' or 'vicarious atonement,' we speak of 'man's responsibility to man.' Instead of 'propitiation for sin,' we speak of 'spiritual bankers' or 'indebtedness to God.' Instead of 'reconciliation with God' we think of 'Man finds God,' or 'Can Man Find God?' The old dogmas and phrases pass away, but the Gospel-truth goes on forever. . . . What we are trying to say, Mr. Editor, is that creeds and dogmas have little place in this day and age. They are not vital to Christian living. To know the Gospel-message is good; meditating upon it is better; practising it is best. To know the Bible and live it is more valuable than to theologize about it. Creeds and dogmas appear to one as externals about the Bible and not truths in the Bible. . . . The early days of creed-making are over. The day served its purpose in the Church, but the common people, which includes most of us, are not stirred by reading or hearing worn-out ideas rejuvenated." Just how the *Lutheran* could print this modernistic abomination without proper criticism we cannot understand. Does the *Lutheran* share the modernistic views here expressed? Or does it perhaps wish to make propaganda for them? Grosser Modernism than this even the grossest Modernists in sectarian circles have never published. The stupid letter itself disproves the claim that creed-making days are over, for the writer himself here states

a rationalistic creed, very similar to those of Tom Paine and Ingersoll, viz., that all Christian creeds must be discarded and that the Christian theology expressed in the phrases "new birth," "vicarious suffering," "propitiation for sin," and the like, in short, the theology of redemption by Christ and salvation by faith in Him, must give way to the modernistic way of salvation by "remaking human nature," "man's responsibility to man," "finding God," and the like. The theology of faith is here replaced by the theology of works, grace by Pelagianism, the divinely revealed Gospel-truth by indefinite, meaningless phrases.

In the same number of the *Lutheran* one August Schneider questions Article XVI of the Augsburg Confession, in particular, that Christians may "engage in just wars and serve as soldiers." This statement of our confession, the writer holds, is "not in agreement with the teachings of the New Testament." Of course, he adduces no Scripture-proof to maintain his position, but he writes: "I am persuaded that the principle of even a 'just' war is the very antithesis of the principles of Jesus Christ," thus hopelessly commingling the two spheres of the temporal and the spiritual and suggesting a Ritschlian conception of Christ's redemptive mission, while basing his belief not upon Scripture but upon his own subjective speculations. "I can visualize Jesus on a cross dying for mankind, but I cannot picture Him in a soldier's uniform, dropping bombs on the very children He came to bless." It is the Modernistic mist that accounts for such confusion in logic and theology. J. T. M.

Baptists and the Social Security Act.—Appointed by the Boston Baptist Ministers' Conference to serve as chairman of a committee to study the proposal of the Social Security Board and to bring in a report for discussion and action by the Conference, the Rev. Dr. O. W. Foye reports his findings in the *Watchman-Examiner* (March 16, 1939) in a most interesting article. Among other things he writes: "This question is definitely before us. The Social Security Act, now effective, exempts religious bodies from taxation for old age pensions and from unemployment-compensation tax. But there are recommendations now before Congress, presented by the Social Security Board, that the present exemption of churches and other religious bodies be lifted and that they become subject to taxation under the existing legislation providing for old-age and unemployment compensation." Some things, he admits, are in favor of the Social Security Act as applied to the provision for the old age of its ministers and other employees; but there are also "things against our support of this Act." Among these are the following: "It would add heavy expense to some of our struggling churches. It does not wholly appear that the Government is so much concerned for our aged church employees as it is to get more money to direct toward payment for increasing war preparations. The number of employees of the Church other than the ministers is negligible. Sextons are mostly past the pension age, and the musicians depend upon other means for their support. The Church has already given over too many of its functions to other agencies, as, for example, healing to the hospitals [?], education to the state [!], and philanthropy to social agencies. If we give over the care of our aged ministers to the Government, it will be a cowardly

shame. If the Church is to be faithful to Christ by providing loving care for others, and if it is to set an example of justice before labor and capital, it must shoulder its own burden and take care of its own employees. It must not be compelled by any government to assume this responsibility. 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel,' 1 Tim. 5:8. The inclusion of the churches under the Social Security Act would add an increasing number of inspectors to the government pay-rolls, thereby increasing taxes, and also add opportunity for political corruption. When we recognize that the Government can collect a Social Security tax from our churches, who can deny those greedy politicians who are already clamoring for a heavy property tax against us? Nearly all Protestant denominations now have trust funds and organizations, which will provide for our clergy larger provisions than that proposed by the Government. When we follow the steps of development of the totalitarian countries abroad, we can definitely trace some of those same steps which are being proposed here in America. Any attempt to give a government authority to receive and pass judgment upon church finances holds the possibility of bringing that country close to the brink of death to all democratic and free institutions. He who handles the money will also direct the policy of the Church and determine the gospel which we preach."

In the set of resolutions passed by the Boston Baptist Ministers' Conference, this body expresses its opposition to any inclusion of the churches of our country under the operation of the National Security Act and pronounces the Act subversive to the moral and spiritual welfare of the churches and contrary to the provisions of our National Constitution, guaranteeing religious liberty. The resolutions declare: "This is a matter of profound conviction of conscience with us, to which we cannot willingly submit." Copies of the resolutions have been sent to the President of our country, all State Representatives in both houses of Congress, while all members of the churches are encouraged to send personal letters to their Representatives in Congress expressing their disapproval of such inclusion of churches under the Social Security Act "as being a violation of our principles of religious liberty." The last resolution reads: "Resolved, That we invite other ministers' conferences to unite with us in preventing, if possible, the invasion of the fundamental principle of our government." The motion by which the resolutions were adopted "was passed by an enthusiastic vote of the conference." We represent this report as one worthy of study in our own circles, though we personally do not agree with every statement that is here made.

J. T. M.

Brief Items. — The French author Lavredan, long known as an atheist, when confronted by the horrors of the World War, made this gripping confession: "I laughed at faith and thought myself wise. Finally this laughter became hollow and vain, for I saw France bleeding and mourning. What would become of France if her children did not believe, if her women did not pray? Oh, a people whose fields are covered with the dead! How difficult it is to remain an atheist on this

national cemetery! I cannot, I cannot! I have deceived myself and you who have read my book. It was a delusion, a giddiness, an evil dream. I saw death and called for life. Hands equipped with weapons make death; folded hands bring life. France, turn back to faith! To forsake God means to be lost! I do not know whether I shall live tomorrow, but I must tell my friends, Lavredan is afraid to die an atheist. I am not afraid of hell; but the thought impresses me, God lives and you are so far from Him. Rejoice, my soul, that I have been permitted to experience the hour when on my knees I can say: I believe, I believe in God. I believe, I believe,—that word is the matin hymn of humanity. For him who does not accept it, it will soon be night."

National Lutheran Council Bulletin

Mississippi has the highest murder rate of all states in the world, civilized or uncivilized, according to a recent statement of L. F. Folse of the State Planning Commission. The State leads the nation in homicides, around 500 a year in a population of two million. Its homicide rate is over twenty-six times that of New Hampshire. Bolivar County, with 71,051 people, had twenty-four homicides, while Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island together had twenty-five. The 91,000 population of Washington and Tazoo counties had more homicides than Wisconsin. The Mississippi homicide rate is fifty times that of England, which occupies approximately the same area but has twenty times the population. Over 300 of the homicides were Negroes killed by Negroes; 50 were Negroes killed by whites; 100 were whites killed by whites; and 10 were whites killed by Negroes. 78 of the slayers were not indicted. Of the 146 convicted, two were hanged. . . . Chicago has half the murder rate of Mississippi, New York one fourth. —*Christian Century*.

An Episcopalian rector of New York, the Rev. Walter Russell Bowie, has accepted the position of Professor of Practical Theology at Union Seminary, New York. Union Seminary ceased long ago having a confessional character.

Canon Raven, Master of Christ College, Cambridge, a leading pacifist, is delivering lectures in our country. He holds that the three great problems of life are named in the words: property, sex, war. When he says that the Church as Church has no answer concerning these problems, he certainly misses the mark widely, because the Word of God has a number of things to say on these topics.

Rev. Emil Hannemann, headmaster of our seminary (A. L. C.) at Amron in New Guinea, now officially called "Lutheran Central School Madang," would be due for furlough and really needs it; but he will postpone it until 1940 in order to finish the first class of this merged seminary—"if his health holds out," as our informant writes.

Lutheran Standard

From the Gaspé area of New Brunswick comes the report that a Roman Catholic congregation of between 70 and 80 families, together with its priest (Abbé Real d'Anjou), has applied for membership in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The report says that these people have become displeased with the financial demands of their bishop during a time of great poverty.

Book Review — Literatur

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Vom Ärgernis des Menschenwortes in der Heiligen Schrift. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift. Von D. Dr. Hans Ruß, Professor in Königsberg. Verlag von E. Bertelsmann. Gütersloh, 1939. 52 Seiten 6×9. Preis, kartoniert: RM. 1.50.

Wir haben es hier mit einem theologischen Kunststück ersten Ranges zu tun. Prof. Ruß verwirft „die Lehre von der wörtlichen Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift“. (S. 30.) „Die Heilige Schrift ist Menschenwort vom ersten bis zum letzten Buchstaben“ (S. 9), enthält „Sagen, Mythen, Märchen, Dichtungen“, „naturkundliche und geschichtskundliche Irrtümer“, ja, „sie enthält Aussagen, welche wider Gottes Wort stehen“ (S. 34), und „verdient als Wort von fehlerbaren Menschen nicht mehr Vertrauen als sonstiges Menschenwort“. Gott hat „seine Kirche davor bewahrt, sich aus der Bibel einen Offenbarungsgötzen zu machen“. (S. 25.) Die Bibel ist in keinem Sinn Gottes Wort. Während die andern Theologen, die die Wortinspiration leugnen, doch dabei behaupten, daß die Schrift Gottes Wort enthält, findet Prof. Ruß darin nichts als fehlerhaftes Menschenwort. Während nun aber diese andern Theologen darauf bestehen, daß das Fehlerhafte in der Bibel beiseitegelegt werde, hält unser Theolog — wie schon vor ihm einige andere — alles in der Heiligen Schrift für wertvoll und fordert uns auf, „das Menschenwort in der Heiligen Schrift gerade in seiner Fehlsamkeit ganz ernst zu nehmen“. (S. 32.) Obwohl „die Heilige Schrift Menschenwort ist vom ersten bis zum letzten Buchstaben“, so ist doch „dies ganze Menschenwort das Zeugnis vom Worte Gottes“. (S. 9.) „Wir müssen das Menschenwort der Heiligen Schrift in seiner ganzen Fehlsamkeit, Armseligkeit, Dürftigkeit und Unsechtheit stehenlassen und es Gott zutrauen, daß er auch durch dieses fehlerbare Menschenwort sein unfehlbares Gotteswort bezeugt und immer zu bezeugen imstande sein wird.“ (S. 33.) Wie geht das zu? Ei, „der Heilige Geist kommt mit dem Zeugnis vom Worte Gottes zu ihm [dem Gläubigen] und führt ihn an der Hand des unzulänglichen, widerspruchsvollen Menschenwortes in alle Wahrheit des Gotteswortes“. (S. 28.) Nein, wir haben Prof. Ruß nicht mißverstanden. Er wiederholt es: „Gott behält es sich vor, uns zu seiner Zeit auch durch ein einzelnes, um seiner Fehlsamkeit willen weniger geachtetes Menschenwort der Heiligen Schrift sein Wort in neuer Weise zu sagen und besonders eindringlich zu bezeugen. Das fehlerbare Menschenwort muß Gott eben allwege zum Zeugnis seines unfehlbaren Wortes dienen, wo und wie es ihm gefällt.“ (S. 34.) Das ist das ungeheuerliche Wunder, das Gott täglich tut: er hat die Apostel, die „die uns vom Herrn gesetzten Lehrer der Kirche sind“ (S. 34), durchaus nicht vor Irrtümern und Widersprüchen bewahrt, aber tut uns nun an der Hand dieses irrtumsvollen Buches so unter der Hand — durch besondere Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes — sein unfehlbares Wort kund. Wir dürfen diese Märchen und Fehler nicht als unwesentlich streichen, wie die gewöhnlichen Theologen tun, sondern „müssen das Menschenwort in der Heiligen Schrift gerade in seiner Fehlsamkeit ganz ernst nehmen. . . . Denn sonst hören wir das Gotteswort, wovon es doch zeugt, schon gar nicht mehr.“ (S. 32.) Gott wollte nicht das Wunder tun, uns eine infolge der wörtlichen Inspiration irrtumsfreie Heilige Schrift zu geben,

sondern verrichtet das viel größere Wunder, uns an der Hand des fehlerhaften Schriftwortes sein unfehlbares Wort zu geben! Man muß natürlich dorthianisch gefühlt sein, um solche Dinge zu schreiben und zu glauben. Hat man einmal den Satz sich eingeprägt, daß in dem Irrtum die Wahrheit sich ausspricht, dann wird man die Fehler der Bibel nicht als wertlos beiseitelegen. Man wird z. B. finden, daß „ein einzelner biblischer Satz wider Gottes Wort ist“. Aber „auch dann besteht die Möglichkeit, daß ein solcher Satz mit seinem Irrtum doch für Gottes Wahrheit zeugt. Denn auch der menschliche Irrtum lebt nur von Gottes Wahrheit“. (S. 36.) Man wird sich nicht an der Fehlsamkeit der Heiligen Schrift, „an ihrer Knechtsgestalt“, ärgern, wenn man glaubt, daß der Heilige Geist die Kunst versteht, uns durch den Irrtum die Wahrheit nahezubringen.

J. h. Engelder

The Bible Comes Alive. By Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. 332 pages, 5½×7½ including index and photographic illustrations. Price, \$2.00.

Sir Charles Marston, who has spent \$200,000 of his own funds to finance Palestinian excavation enterprises, records in this absorbing report on recent archeological discoveries in Bible lands the astounding results of the Wellcome-Marston Expedition, which, among other amazing finds, unearthed the famous Lachish letters, written in the later Phœnician-Hebrew script. In four introductory chapters the author first records earlier discoveries regarding Scriptural data concerning Abraham, Moses, and the fall of Jericho, after which in nine climactically arranged chapters he discusses the remarkable finds at Lachish. Appendices (special valuable contributions by the late Dr. Langdon of Oxford, Alan Rowe of the Beisan Expedition, John Garstang of the Jericho Expedition, Marston and A. H. Gardiner) are added, showing, among other things, that monotheism was the predecessor of polytheism in Sumerian religion and discussing in detail such important topics as the inscription of the Lachish Bowl, the date of Joshua's destruction of Jericho, the date of the Exodus, and the origin of our alphabet, while an extremely important comparative chronology of early Bible history, in agreement with both Scripture and the recent archeological discoveries, forms a fitting conclusion. Thirty-one plates, exhibiting and explaining the finds at Lachish, and six plans and drawings illustrating various historic events in the history of Lachish, are appended. The entire book reads like a romance and while composed with scientific precision, is nevertheless popular enough to hold spellbound intelligent lay readers. We wish that this book could be placed into the hands of every Sunday-school teacher and be put on the shelf of every church and secular library. It is a masterpiece of popular presentation of archeological finds, and it supports in particular the Biblical time of Israel's entry into Canaan and the Biblical claim that Moses and the Israelite followers were able to write down God's laws and words. While Moses was in Midian, there was in existence already the peculiar Sinai-Hebrew script, and later this was modified into the Phœnician-Hebrew script, Israel's gift to the Phœnicians, and not *vice versa*. There is an excellent spirit of genuine piety and holy faith pervading Sir Marston's book, which he wrote to prove that the "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture" has not ceased to be a rock. He writes: "The effect of these discoveries

is to further discredit the whole process of destructive criticism. Archeology, a strictly objective science, is disproving the subjective negations spun from the mentality of the critics. Those who have shaken popular faith in the Bible and undermined its authority, are in turn undermined themselves by the evidence that has been brought to light, and their authority is destroyed. The spade is driving destructive criticism out of the field of questional facts into that of recognized fiction."

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Luthers Evangelienauslegung. Neuauflage in 5 Teilen. Herausgegeben von Lic. Erwin Mülhaupt. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. 5 Lieferungen oder erster Band, 304 Seiten $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$. Subskriptionspreis der Lieferung je RM. 1.80; Auslandspreis je RM. 1.35. Preis des ersten Bandes RM. 11.80, bei Subskription auf das ganze Werk RM. 8.85; Auslandspreis RM. 10.80, bei Subskription RM. 8.10.

Gar manche der älteren Leser kennen Luthers Evangelien- und Epistelauslegung von G. Eberle, die früher in unsern Kreisen mit Recht viel gebraucht wurde und auch jetzt noch, wenn sie antiquarisch auftaucht, Käufer findet. Weil Luther eben keine vollständige Auslegung der Evangelien und Episteln gegeben hatte, so war dies Werk mit großem Fleiß aus seinen einzelnen Schriften zusammengestellt. Hier erschönt nun aber ein Werk, das noch umfassender ist, nämlich Luthers Auslegung der vollständigen vier heiligen Evangelien. Das Werk ist auf fünf Teile berechnet: Erster Teil: Die Weihnachts- und Vorgesichte bei Matthäus und Lukas, Matth. 1 und 2; Luk. 1—3. Zweiter Teil: Das Matthäusevangelium, Kap. 3—25. Dritter Teil: Das Markus- und Lukasevangelium (mit Ausnahme von Mark. 16; Luk. 1—3 und 22—24). Vierter Teil: Das Johannesevangelium (mit Ausnahme der Passions- und Sterterte). Fünfter Teil: Die Passions- und Sterterte aus allen vier Evangelien. Dies ist darum ein wertvolles Werk, und welcher lutherische Theolog sollte sich nicht dafür interessieren, was Luther zur Auslegung der vier Evangelien gesagt hat? Hat Luther sich lateinisch ausgesprochen, so sind diese Stellen übersetzt worden und am Anfang mit einem Stern (*) bezeichnet, damit das Werk auch von Laien, die die Bibel lieben und sich gern von Luther etwas über sie sagen lassen, gelesen werden kann. Bei den deutschen Texten wurden hier und da lange Sätze geteilt, und Ausdrücke und Wendungen Luthers, die heutzutage schwerer verständlich sind, wurden vereinfacht, aber nur im Notfall, wenn die Lesbarkeit und Verständlichkeit für den heutigen Leser es zu fordern schien. Immer ist genau angegeben, wo sich die betreffende Ausföhrung Luthers in der großen Weimarer Lutherausgabe findet. Der Text ist dann mit wertvollen Anmerkungen versehen, um die Anspielungen Luthers recht verständlich zu machen, und das ganze Werk, obwohl populär gehalten, steht doch zugleich auch auf der Höhe der heutigen Lutherforschung. Wie angedeutet, ist der erste Band jetzt abgeschlossen und zum bequemen Gebrauch auch mit einem Sach- und Namenregister versehen. Die einzelnen Bände können auch einzeln bezogen werden; nur erhält man das Werk billiger, wenn man auf alle fünf Teile subscribiert. In etwa drei Jahren soll es vollständig vorliegen. Wenn mehrere Auslegungen Luthers vorhanden waren, ist die wertvollste ausgewählt worden. So ist das Werk eine Fundgrube sowohl für die persönliche Bibelarbeit wie auch für die Vorbereitung des Pfarrers auf Predigt, Bibelfunde und Unterricht, und wir sehen den weiteren Lieferungen mit viel Interesse entgegen.

L. Fürbringer

Peter and the Church. By G. Campbell Morgan, D. D. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 96 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Dr. Morgan, now advanced in years, deservedly occupies a high place in the esteem of Bible Christians because he is a master of popular Biblical exposition. In the volume before us he discusses Matt. 16:17-19 and 1 Pet. 2:5-10, passages which refer to the Church and which were either spoken to or by Peter. One is glad to see that the Church is correctly defined as the body of believers. (P.26.) In fact, doctrinally the volume is sound and reliable. Now and then one cannot agree with the author's interpretation. Thus the great passage Matt. 16:19, speaking of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, is held by Dr. Morgan to refer to what the Church *teaches* on the basis of the Scriptures. He takes the meaning to be that, when the Church, in obedience to her Master's orders, proclaims something as binding upon us, it is binding, and when she on this basis declares something to be a matter of indifference, this may be omitted or done, as we choose. A Lutheran will at once say that the doctrine is right, but the exegesis is wrong, as the parallel passages, especially John 20:23, show. The volume apart from its edifying contents is of value for the preacher through its demonstrating to him how expository preaching can be effectively done.

W. ARNDT

Doctrine in the Church of England. The report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922. The Macmillan Company, 1938. 242 pages, 5¼×8¼. Price, \$1.75.

In introducing this report, the chairman, Archbishop Temple, states that the commission of some twenty churchmen was appointed to "consider the grounds and nature of Christian doctrine with a view to demonstrating the extent of existing agreement within the Church of England and with a view to investigating how far it is possible to remove or diminish the existing differences." The commission endeavored to treat the divergent theological views synthetically and hoped that by a process of cooperative thought they could fashion a Christian theology more adequate than any that has preceded it. (P.24.) The report does not contain a comprehensive presentation of all doctrines held in the Anglican Church but emphasizes those doctrines concerning which there is controversy. In this review we shall restrict ourselves to four major points.

1. Authority in religion. The commission seems agreed that the first authoritative source of doctrine is Scripture. But the Bible is not accepted as the absolute norm, for not only is the doctrine of inspiration denied (e. g., the gospels do not contain the *ipsissima verba* of Christ but reflect the experience of the primitive Church (p.33); some of the Bible's utterances are inspiring and therefore inspired (p.28); but the Bible is viewed as the record of God's self-disclosure in history and experience, and therefore not individual statements of the Bible but the book "as a whole" is the norm of doctrine. In conformity with Anglican thinking, which overemphasizes the Church, the voice of the Church, the *consensus fidelium*, is viewed as the second authority in religion. But also this is not a binding norm; for this free and continued consensus, especially as

it is expressed in the Anglican formularies, does not imply detailed assent to every doctrinal and liturgical phrase. The report advocates the theory of "doctrinal development." True, it states that the revelation in Christ is final. But it claims with equal emphasis that the content of this revelation is recognized in the religious and moral development of the human race as a whole and is ever more fully apprehended in the life of the mystical body of Christ. (P. 43.)

2. Sin and grace. Sin is "the universal experience that man tends to do what is other than perfectly good" (p. 60). Original guilt is corporate and therefore not individual guilt, or *reatus*. On the doctrine of sin the commission decided that "it is clear that the Church is not committed to any one doctrine" (p. 69) and thus followed the "fathers of Trent," who, failing to settle the divergent views between the Scotists and Thomists, agreed on an ambiguous and meaningless phrase. An Anglican clergyman, Rev. A. G. Hebert, in "Memorandum on the Report" complains that the commission speaks with an uncertain and hesitating voice on the doctrine of man and sin.—In its definition of grace the commission has remained quite close to Eastern Orthodoxy by defining it as *favor Dei* and as *gratia infusa*. (P. 52.)

3. Person and work of Christ. The commission is agreed only in this, that "it is our duty to seek ways to solve the intellectual difficulties" of the *unio personalis*. (P. 83.) It is admitted that the Virgin Birth is both accepted and denied by members of the Church and of the commission. (P. 83.) Christ's death and resurrection is viewed merely as a pledge and symbol of man's ultimate victory through his own suffering and death. (P. 86.) The governmental theory of the atonement seems to meet the approval of the commissioners. (P. 91 ff.)

4. The Church, the ministry, and the Sacraments. Almost one half of the report is devoted to these points. The unity and fellowship of the *una sancta* are predicated of the visible Church. The emphasis is on "the social and corporate character" of the Church, which is defined not as the communion of *believers* but as "the whole company of those who share in the *regenerate* life." (P. 106.) The unity of this social community is not to be sought in doctrinal but rather in sacramental unity. The report lists divergent opinions on the specific manner in which the Sacraments are efficacious, on the Real Presence, e. g., transubstantiation, virtualism, receptionism (168 ff.), on the question whether the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament or a sacrifice; but the commissioners are agreed that the Sacraments are important because "they afford an instance of that corporate action without which the corporate life of the Church must atrophy" (p. 126). The theory of the episcopacy *jure divino* is upheld as the means whereby the unity and continuity of the Church is maintained.

The report is highly significant and deserves careful study for the following reasons: 1. Anglican theologians are playing a prominent part in the World Conference on Faith and Order, in which virtually all denominations excepting the Roman Church are represented. It seems that the theological principles of this report will be largely represented in the unionistic World Conference. 2. Denominations cannot always

be evaluated on the basis of their historical confessions. In a letter the present reviewer was informed that the doctrinal position of the Protestant Episcopal Church is probably most clearly represented in this report. This Church must therefore be viewed on the basis of this report in spite of the opposition which has been voiced against it. 3. Instead of simplifying the proposed union between the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches this report with its emphasis on the Episcopalian form of government seems to widen rather than to close the chasm between the two churches.

F. E. MAYER

Our Protestant Heritage. A series of sermons by Harold John Ockenga, Minister, Park Street Congregational Church, Boston, Mass. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 140 pages. Price, \$1.00.

In these times, when you hear and read so much about unions and unionism, it is somewhat refreshing to find an author who is against union, absolutely, even denominational union; for even "denominations obscure Protestantism's functioning." The ideal he finds in his own church, Park Street Church, which has its own constitution and is answerable to no one but its own congregation. The publishers describe the book as a vigorous defense of democracy; really it is a plea for Congregationalism. Unionism, he says, means enforced uniformity, a new Rome; violated convictions; and, above all, suppression of soul liberty or the right of dissent; and that is the genius of Protestantism; and if Protestantism fails, America is doomed. Even practically this individualism would solve many of our present troubles. Abolish all hierarchies and committees and organizations demanding support with high-pressure salesmanship and campaigns, and let the inspiration come from below through heart interest, and some colleges supported by Christian gifts and teaching anti-Christian theories would immediately end their career of destruction. Kill all secretaries, metaphorically, of course, by removing them from mediating between missionaries and churches, and let the returned missionaries make their appeal directly; if they have the fire of God, the money will come; if not, the work deserves to die. Where there are too many churches in a community, instead of subsidizing them, let them compete for the support needed and let nature take its course — survival of the fittest.

In seven chapters the author tries to show how we came by our Protestant heritage. It is a "dialectic" in seven steps: Luther, the Reformation Truths; Zwingli, the Reformed Doctrine of Communion; Calvin, the Truth of Predestination; William of Orange, Christian Liberty; Knox, the Power of Conscience; Cromwell, the Providence of God; and, finally, Roger Williams, who perfected the work of the Reformation by bringing the genius of Protestantism to America.

His theology is poor. Luther did not completely break with Rome in the doctrine of Communion; "he taught that the words of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John [?] 'This is My body,' were literal." His Calvin, in a frantic effort to explain his predestination, becomes a synergist.

But his history is poorer. There should be a kind of NRA to compel

any man who in this day and age wants to write on Reformation history to read something later than Mosheim. Mistakes and inaccuracies are innumerable in the book. Luther was reared in penury. The Pope first dispatched Eck to refute Luther, then commanded Cajetan to silence him, then sent Miltitz to bribe him. Zwingli was born seven weeks before the birth of Luther. Calvin held to an Episcopal ministry. Henry of Navarre, in 1572, married the daughter of the French king, though Margaret was nineteen years old and the king twenty-two. Catherine of Aragon was the aunt of Philip of Spain, and because of the strength of Philip the Pope did not dare to sanction Henry VIII's divorce, though all this happened in 1527, the very year in which Philip was born. The Church in England "retained the Episcopal form and hence became Anglican!" Here are two sentences in which not one statement is true: "William, Prince of Orange, was born of a noble Roman Catholic family whose ancestry went back to the beginnings of Netherland history. In marriage his father and mother had united the two provinces of Nassau and Orange, which were the wealthiest sections of the most prosperous North countries." William's parents were Lutherans, but he was reared Catholic at the court of Charles V, where he became a page at the age of ten. His father was Count of Nassau and had nothing to do with Orange, but William inherited it from a cousin who died childless. Nor did the Counts of Nassau have anything to do with the Netherlands; first contact between the two came when William was made *Stadtholder*. And if any traveler has found Nassau and Orange in the North countries, his compass must have stuck, like Corrigan's. Nassau is in South Germany and Orange in Southern France, only 60 miles from the Mediterranean! — Why should such books be published? They are no credit to the author nor to the publisher.

THEO. HOYER

Lesson Commentary for Sunday-Schools. 1939. Edited by Charles P. Wiles and D. Burt Smith. United Lutheran Publication House. 319 pages, 6×9. Price, \$1.75.

This lesson commentary does not follow the series which has been adopted by our synodical Board of Education but that of the International Sunday-school Lessons. The first quarter treats of the "Life and Work of Peter"; the second, the "Life and Letters of Paul"; the third, "Lessons from Israel's Leaders (Solomon to Isaiah)"; the fourth, "The Kingdom of Heaven: Studies in Matthew." While most of these lessons can hardly be correlated with the Catechism text, they certainly do convey eternal truths of the Word of God and as such may serve their purpose. The treatment of the lessons follows the same plan: an explanation of the text; geographical and historical material, if any; the lesson interpreted; the lesson applied. A feature of every quarter is a temperance lesson. In the hands of a skilful leader this material may serve to train Sunday-school teachers for their responsible task, at least so far as subject-matter is concerned. It will certainly be necessary for every teacher to make his own lesson plans, especially by way of selecting important points, choosing methods, working out questions, and, above all, in trying to induce thinking on the part of the pupils. Pastors who are anxious to remain out of a rut will do well to make an occasional

examination of books of this type. We may not be able to use them as they are offered, but it will certainly sharpen our judgment and possibly develop initiative if we study the work of others in the field of Christian education.

P. E. KRETTZMANN

Our Mission among the Blind. By Rev. A. H. Kuntz, 805 Lindaraxa Park, Alhambra, Calif. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 44 pages, 5×7. Price, 25 cts.

We hope that this interesting and timely pamphlet on our Missions among the Blind will reach all communicant members in our Church, so that they may love also this important mission. Pastor Kuntz, who is in charge of the work, vividly describes the history and extent of our missionary efforts among the blind and proves by word and picture that they are not in vain but greatly blessed. May our congregations ardently support this mission, which at this time is only in its beginnings.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Gospel According to Strange Evangelists. By John Schmidt, B.D. 118 pages. Price, \$1.00.

If He Should Fail. By Chester M. Savage. 142 pages. Price, \$1.00.

Sermon Seeds in the Psalms. By A. MacFadyen. 140 pages. Price, \$1.00.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York:

God's Control. By Samuel M. Shoemaker. 155 pages. Price, \$1.50.

From the Abingdon Press, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago:

I Forgot to Say. A Gust of Afterthought. By F. W. Boreham. 284 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.75.

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